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SECOND FRONT

THE "public clamour" for a Second Front is not an irresponsible effort by a section of the public to dictate strategical policy to the Government. It is the inevitable reaction to the most dangerous situation since 1940. On June 12, when the Anglo-Soviet Treaty was signed, Mr. Eden announced that "a full understanding was reached between the two parties with regard to the urgent task of creating a Second Front in Europe in 1942." This formula did not promise any particular offensive this summer, but it implied that Britain and Russia were agreed on the necessity of organising a British attack on the Continent in 1942. Since then the urgency has grown. Hitler's forces move even more rapidly towards the Caucasus than pessimists had anticipated. Russia has already lost her most productive and fertile areas. If no offensive is ready soon it may be too late. If the Soviet Union is deprived of offensive power, vast German land and air forces will be available for the West. Mr. Churchill owes his position in the minds and hearts of the British people largely to his clear realisation before and during the war that only by concerted action could the Nazi career of piecemeal conquest be stopped. The Second Front demand, whether it comes from Trafalgar Square or from elsewhere, is a sign of acute anxiety lest once again Hitler should succeed in destroying his victims "one by one."

Mr. Bevin's rebuke to those who clamour and his remark that this is "not the only way of winning the war" were not likely to allay public uneasiness. We are well aware of the dangers and difficulties of creating a Second Front. There are even those who believe that Britain and America can win the war in 1943 or some future year by the mere preponderance of bombing aeroplanes. Again, we are told that we still lack the men, the materials and, above all, the right kind of shipping. Much more may be said on the technical side: we should summarise it all by saying that land Powers forget that Britain is a small country with a naval, rather than a military tradition, and a limited man power now largely employed in maintaining the lifelines of this country in the Navy and Merchant Navy, in a giant Air Force and in war production, a substantial part of which is convoyed at great peril to the Soviet Union. All this is important as a reminder that our forces are limited, that any invasion of the Continent must be of a scale adequate to compel Hitler to transfer substantial forces to the West.

Behind much of the agitation is the fear that even now not all our Authorities have reached the point of realising that this war must be won in conjunction with Russia and that we have other Allies in Europe to-day, who may not be able to help us unless our attack synchronises with Russian resistance. The raid on St. Nazaire, taken by the French as the beginning of the invasion, showed an immediate readiness on the part of the citizens to rise against their oppressors. The same thing is true of a large part of the Continent. The psychological results of a British invasion of Europe to-day would be incalculable. A British-American invasion of Europe would bring to the oppressed peoples both food and weapons. An invading Allied force is certain of an immediate welcome to-day, and for as long as Russia can maintain her heroic resistance and the German garrisons in the West remain weak. Let us be equally clear that we can expect no such general support if the summer and autumn of 1942 pass without a British invasion. Hope must not be too long deferred. The odds against the German occupying forces must not be too great. Above all, hunger will have its inevitable results. Starving people do not make revolutions or offer effective aid to invading armies. Again, if Russia is reduced to a stubborn defensive, deprived of her food, her best oil areas and her striking power, the effects on the morale of this country are likely to be as devastating as on that of the Continent. The result could only be a dangerous growth of both anger and apathy.

We add one suggestion by way of hastening the Second Front. We believe that as long as generals, admirals and air marshals are consulted as heads of separate services and asked for advice about the feasibility of any plan, technical difficulties will always be decisive. They are real; the risks are great; losses will certainly be terrible. It would be wise for the Cabinet to appoint a joint command of younger men and say to them, not "Do you think you can overcome the difficulties for an offensive in 1942?" but "An offensive is necessary this year. You are in charge of combined operations. Work out your plans. The country and the Government are behind you." The gulf that is now opening so dangerously between the Government and the more alert half of the British public would, we believe, be narrowed if the public were sure that the men entrusted with the task of overcoming the technical problems in the shortest possible time were younger men of the type of Lord Louis Mountbatten.

Russia's Peril

There is little comfort to be drawn even from the closest study of the news from the Russian Front. As usual the Germans may be anticipating and exaggerating their successes, but the Russians are candid in admitting their dire peril. The purpose of this terrific south-eastward drive, concentrated as last year's attack was not, is plainly to eliminate Russia as an effective military Power this year, before America's strength can be brought to bear. Whether the Germans hope to use some of the Caucasian oil-wells, as well as to deny all or most of them to the Russians is a secondary matter. They have already got some of the mines of manganese ore, which may be more necessary to them than oil. In this connection not the least significant item in the week's military news may be the German claim to have sunk two big oil-tankers on the Volga by bombing: already the threat to Russia's supply has begun to operate. The main German strength is now engaged in crossing the Don on a wide front. The Russians have evacuated Rostov after a bloody struggle and also the Cossack capital of Novocherkask. The Germans have crossed the Don at or near Rostov and claim to have occupied Bataisk, which may mean that they intend to drive south-eastwards along the railway and pipe-line towards the Caspian sea. Of their other

crossings much farther East near Tsymlyansk several have failed but two seem to have succeeded. Here they threaten the railway running from Stalingrad to the Black Sea port of Novorossisk. It is to be feared that they have so timed their operations as to cut the Russians off from the grain harvests of the rich lands both north and south of the Don. Of the other drive due eastwards towards the bend of the Don and Stalingrad we know less, but it has not been checked. Round Voronezh, on the other hand, the stubborn and costly struggle continues and here the Russians are gaining a little ground. May we soon expect Timoshenko's counter-stroke? Has he an army in reserve either near Stalingrad or in the Caucasus? It is more probable that he will deliver his counter-offensive on General Zukhov's central sector. Measured by the vast scale of these operations, our own contribution seems slight. From Egypt there are only limited operations to record on the El Alamein Front, with indecisive results. Here the R.A.F. retains its ascendancy in the air, and it has carried out several raids on a big scale, some of them by day, against targets in German seaports, the river-port of Duisburg, and railways in Northern France. The enemy's reply on a much less impressive scale fell chiefly on Birmingham.

"Independence"?

Mr. Eden's speech at Nottingham last week placed him decidedly with the New Dealers among the Liberal progressives who are trying to think out the constructive problems of the post-war world. The most interesting passage in it stipulated that the financial and economic aid we may give to other countries after the war must be so managed that it results in no loss of independence. That was well said, but Mr. Eden did not explain in detail how the real difficulties are to be met. Will our co-operation with post-war France, for example, be divorced from the question whether the Fourth Republic is going to be predominantly Communist, Socialist, clerical or liberal-capitalist in tendency? Will not our mere choice of the channel through which we dispense it go far to determine the direction of her development? Or again, take this concrete case: a Balkan State with a Leftish provisional government seeks economic aid. Shall we refrain from asking whether it proposes to move in Moscow's orbit or in ours? It is possible to assume that the relations of Moscow and London may be so intimate and cordial that the question will not arise in that form. But will not our financial advisers incline to take a pessimistic view of the solvency of any would-be creditor which follows a Leftward policy at home? Theoretically the only hopeful way out of such difficulties may be to create a European Federation, which would manage all such transactions. But that can hardly be achieved in the early days after the armistice. What, meanwhile, are the guarantees for impartiality?

Shipping

We are told that the vast American shipbuilding programme is getting into its stride; and it is plain that we must look to the American yards to perform the major part of the feat of increased production that is needed. But, with the American output still a very long way behind the rate of sinkings, it is necessary closely to scrutinise our own position.

There seems no disposition to consider seriously how total shipbuilding capacity can be increased by the adoption of new methods analogous to those now being used in the United States. If we were certain this would be a short war, it could be argued that these avenues were no longer worth exploring, in view of the obstinate refusal to explore them sooner. If we believed that more merchant building here would really reduce the tonnage built for the Navy, we should naturally hesitate to urge our point. But the question is not one of diverting berths from naval to merchant building, but of bringing back disused shipyards and equipping them to apply new methods, including the adaptation of new grades of labour to eke out the shortages of regular workers.

Royal Ordnance

Some of the complaints made recently about the Royal Ordnance Factories need careful scrutiny before they can be accepted as valid. A war in which most of the army is standing by and not engaged in active operations naturally means a very small expenditure of shells and other ammunition. A large proportion of the R.O.F.s are filling factories, or factories for making shells, cartridge cases, and similar requisites. It is necessary to have factories of these types ready to turn out vast supplies of ammunition as soon as the armies require it; and for this purpose they must have plenty of labour available—most of it of a pretty unskilled type. It is not desirable to build up ahead vast stocks of finished ammunition, both because these are nasty things to have lying about to be bombed, and partly because as specifications are altered, stocks may be rendered useless by changes in the weapons employed. We are not suggesting that everything in the R.O.F.s is lovely, but only that some of the critics are inclined to forget considerations of this kind when they are passing judgment. The problem is to find alternative ways of using, while it is waiting on the opening of the Second Front, the labour that must be held ready to produce shells and cartridges like mad when the need arises; and there is the second problem of combing out of the R.O.F.s any surplus of skilled workers they may be retaining, and putting in less skilled workers in their places. It suits private enterprise very nicely to have violent attacks made on the efficiency of the State-managed R.O.F.s. Very possibly some of them are inefficient; for the lowness of State salaries has made it difficult to get good managers, and private enterprise prefers to hold on to its own best men. But it is, to a certain extent, in the nature of things for shell factories and filling factories to show poor results when most of the armies they exist to serve are not actually fighting and there is a shortage of transport for getting their products to those units which are fighting in distant theatres of war.

Federation or Union?

The Mineworkers' Federation has announced its intention of working out plans for turning itself into a consolidated National Union. There have been similar plans before; but they have always broken down, partly over financial difficulties and partly because of wide differences of traditional practice from one coalfield to another. On the financial side, some of the Miners' Unions—Durham, for example—have much higher contributions than others, such as South Wales, and proportionately wider benefits covering sickness and disability and unemployment, as well as loss of earnings during trade disputes. This has meant in national strikes that some areas have run out of funds long before others, and has caused the militants to demand unification; but when it has come to the point each Union has wished to stick to its traditional ways. There is the further obstacle that methods of working and classification of labour, as well as methods of fixing wages, differ widely from coalfield to coalfield. The colliery owners, who have always stood out for purely local bargaining and have refused to recognise the M.F.G.B. as a wage-negotiating unit, have insisted on these differences, which arise partly, though by no means entirely, from variations in the conditions of coal-getting in the different areas. Even a consolidated National Union would have to leave a good deal of room for local bargaining on account of these variations; but the miners hope that it would enable them to get a number of principles established nationally, including a national minimum wage. It is, of course, the assumption of State control over the mines that makes the miners now more than ever anxious to establish a united front, as a single National Union could press much more effectively than a loose Federation for a real share in the control of the industry. Probably the inducement will prove strong enough to bring about a substantial change in the distribution of powers between the M.F.G.B. and its constituent bodies, but it is to be doubted whether complete unification is even now practicable.

Coal Output

Mr. Lawther, at the Miners' Conference, insisted strongly that it was up to the miners to make the new coal plan a success by giving the additional output that is needed, even though they are by no means fully satisfied with the plan in the form in which it has been put into effect. Mr. Lawther spoke strongly, but there seemed to be in his speech an undertone of doubt. It will take a good deal to convince the miners that the pits are now being operated exclusively in the national interest, without regard to the post-war plans of their owners, or that the State is doing all it can to ensure that no coal shall be wasted either in industry or by the domestic consumers. There is some reassurance in the latter respect in the fact that householders have been made to fill up forms which can be used at any moment as a basis for rationing, but what has become of the promise to scrutinise carefully all forms of industrial coal consumption? If this promise is being carried out, the public has heard nothing about it; and, for purposes of reassurance, the public ought to be told fully what is being done. Within a couple of months, the period during which stocking up for the winter can be expected will be over; and it is urgent to make what use can still be made of the scanty time that is left. But the domestic consumer has still been given only the vaguest exhortations to economy, and industry, as far as we are able to make out, is still carrying on exactly as before.

Parliament and a Second Front *(by a Parliamentary Correspondent)*

The row in the House of Commons on Wednesday and Mr. Greenwood's vote against his own amendment, which his followers insisted in supporting in spite of him, has produced an important shift in parliamentary forces. Greenwood withdrew his opposition to the new proposals on Old Age Pensions, although he had insisted that the Government's promises were not sufficient. Bevin rose to say that the question of capital savings and the small savings of the Old Age Pensioner would be dealt with in the coming session. But there was a mass refusal by the Labour benches to accept this as an adequate assurance. Members, including Shinwell and Bevin, got heated and angry. Bevin withdrew hard words and apologised; Labour Members remained angry and muttering. In the division which followed the biggest Labour vote against the Government since May, 1940, was recorded, and as Members remarked, elections for officers and leaders of the Party come after the recess.

We may now get some straight talking on the Second Front in the House as well as in Trafalgar Square. The *Times* report of the Trafalgar Square demonstration, when some 60,000 people, serious political-minded Londoners and Service men and women of all classes, shouted their assent to a programme of stern sacrifice, gives a correct record of a statement as soberly worded as any statement in Parliament. Concern about the second front is by no means confined to the Left in the House. Service members, including those who have themselves campaigned in Russia against the Bolsheviks, are very deeply concerned. The issue is not to save Russia alone, but to save ourselves and, above all, our cause. We need a "second" front because there is only one front, a "defence in depth" across the continents of Europe and Asia.

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PARTIES—AGEING AND GROWING

THE figures which the *Manchester Guardian* published last week confirmed an impression which had been growing in the public mind for some considerable time: Labour is becoming a very elderly party. Arranged by percentages in age groups the Conservatives in the Commons have the advantage all the way along the line. Forty per cent. of the Labour Members are over sixty years of age. In its total of 162 there are 20 septuagenarians, two octogenarians, and only one man under thirty. The political truce seems to be aggravating this tendency. Vacancies are automatically filled by ageing trade-union officials, and this party shows no sign of a wish to discover talent among its younger adherents. The same conclusion, we believe, would follow if an inquiry were made into the age composition of its National Executive and the higher ranks of the bureaucracy at Transport House. The lack of freshness and imagination in its policy, and of magnetism in its leadership is in keeping with its grey hairs, and so is the partisan narrowness which it shows in its conception of discipline. For many a year past all the initiative in thinking, as in action, on the Left has come from unorthodox groups on its fringes or outside it. Its active membership in the constituencies suffers from an abiding sense of frustration, because at conferences it can always be steam-rollered by the block-vote cast by the officials of the bigger Trade Unions. It has come to resemble only too painfully the German Social-Democratic Party which with much the same age-composition clung to its benches in the Reichstag, while the Nazis stormed the citadel with shock-troops drawn from men in the late twenties and early thirties. That advantage was one of the reasons which enabled the Nazis to win their disastrous hold over German youth. Happily, as yet, no such rival has appeared in this country. But the ominous parallel is so far valid that the Labour Party is ceasing to interest the younger generation. The manual workers are still loyal to their trade unions and at a contested election the Labour Party can still rely on their votes. It has behind it the immense asset of class solidarity which has always given it at a general election its eight to ten million votes. But is there here the vitality and the faith which can give to a growing mass movement the impetus to construct a new society?

From another angle recent events invite us to consider the future of the Labour Party. Two independent groups, the 1941 Committee and Sir Richard Acland's Forward March movement, have united under the name of "Common Wealth." They have as yet no mass following, but they have had some considerable success in influencing recent by-elections. They say that it is not their intention to form a party. That is a matter of definition. A group which has agreed on a comprehensive nine-point programme, which aims at building up an organisation in the constituencies and already contests elections, is what most of us would call a party. It owes its success to the abnormal conditions of the truce, for its candidates have won seats against Tories only because no Labour man was in the field. What will happen when a general election is held under the old conditions? If the Labour Party follows its usual practice of putting up a candidate in virtually every constituency, few of these independents will be returned, though it is equally obvious that some and perhaps many constituencies will be presented to the Tories which a progressive independent might have won. Some of the independents in recent by-elections have been mere adventurers and others may have Fascist tendencies. We are concerned here only with the specific question whether there is a case for welcoming the advent in our political life of such a group as "Common Wealth," which has a Socialist programme, does attract able and honourable men, and is sufficiently well organised to exclude undesirable candidates. Hitherto the Labour Party has acted on the long-term calculation that there is room in our politics only for two parties. It slowly wore down the Liberal Party to a shadow of its former self and rejected every suggestion for a Popular Front. Under one of two conditions this "Common Wealth" group might have a future. It might reach an understanding with Transport House that it should contest, without Labour opposition, seats which it had the better prospect of winning. Or again, the Labour Party which has, without enthusiasm, toyed in the past with the expedient of the alternative vote in single-member constituencies, might be induced to insist on this reform before the next general election. But it is not an expedient which any party machine in its situation is likely to welcome. It would save the remnant of the Liberal Party and it might result in the return of a number of adherents of the "Common Wealth" group and also of a number of Communists. On the other hand, until Transport House can do better than it has yet done in rural and partly middle-class areas, its prospects, with its present leadership and composition, of ever achieving an absolute majority seem to us slender. The doubt has often crossed our mind whether in fact it does aim in the near future at the heavy responsibility of power. It has shrunk from choosing as its leader any personality capable of interesting the wider public. The outlook of its predominantly trade unionist personnel does not fit them for the adventure of Socialist construction. Their tendency is to use political action as a supplement to industrial pressure to improve the lot of the workers within a capitalist system which in fact they accept as the permanent structure of our society. On that reading it may suit them that the Labour Party should remain what it is, an influential Opposition, which can secure many gains for their class, short of fundamental and structural changes. Their interest in international affairs seems to grow slighter than it was, and their outlook less distinctive and less consciously Socialist.

In facing the future, the central question, as we see it, is whether this party can ever attract the strata of the middle class which might be won for Socialism. Technicians, managers and clerks have become very much more numerous than Marx foresaw and with them may be classed the teachers and at least the younger and less wealthy professional men. In function these men and women are workers and most of them are employees. They have no interest in the maintenance of monopoly capitalism, and the abler of them have a scientific outlook whose values are at variance with the profit motive. Few of them are tied by any firm allegiance to the Conservative Party or accept as their natural leaders the wealthy men who buy their way into the House. On the other hand, for a variety of reasons, the Labour Party does not interest or attract them. Some of them are incorrigible snobs and congenitally timid, but others have more creditable grounds for dismissing as uncongenial the outlook of the more limited minds among the leaders of the Trade Unions. A minority from these social groups has in the past generation joined the Labour Party and given it most of its writers and thinkers, but it has never managed to attract the main body of this intermediate class. It matters little who or what is to blame; in fact, the majority of such people are rarely at their ease in the Labour Party, and this maladjustment rather grows than diminishes. We have now to ask ourselves whether an organisation like this "Common Wealth" group might succeed where the Labour Party has on the whole failed. Unless this section of the middle class, considerable as it is in mere numbers and influential by reason of its intelligence, education and aptitude for leadership, can be detached from the Conservative Party and helped to understand the aims of Socialist planning, it is doubtful whether an absolute majority can ever be won for a Socialist programme. It is even more doubtful whether the Labour Party alone, if it could roll up the necessary millions at the polls, would command the prestige and self-confidence to carry it out against the interests entrenched in industry and finance. The success in a rural constituency of Mr. Vernon Bartlett and of Mr. Driberg and Mr. Reakes in semi-middle-class constituencies suggests that a third party, based on this intermediate class, might be built up with an outlook, undogmatic perhaps, yet in direction Socialist, which would march with the Labour Party as far and perhaps faster than it wishes to go. It is in this connection significant that an able Independent like Miss Rathbone can win a University seat, a feat which no Labour candidate has ever accomplished. But the condition of any success along this new path is that the Labour Party should be friendly and tolerant. If it resorts to its customary weapon of the ban, it may wreck a hopeful movement, but will it thereby hasten the coming of Socialism?

To sum up, we have made, for argument's sake, the assumption which the Labour Party itself makes, that our development after the war will still proceed on constitutional lines. We foresee a greater variety of political groups than in the past, presumably a stronger Communist Party, and certainly one or more sections of Left Independents, including a few Liberals. We anticipate a swing Leftwards on a broad front, but doubt whether the Labour Party as it now is can profit by it to the extent of gaining an absolute majority. On this reading of the future, we would plead for an attitude of friendly tolerance towards such a group as "Common Wealth." With it an advance into Socialist construction should be possible: without it, or against it, Labour may remain in permanent opposition, while youth in its disillusion would turn to Fascism.

I.R.O.

THE Atlantic Charter to those literal-minded fellows, the scientists, is not a statement of pious aspirations; it is a formula for action. They demand in that formula certain constants before they start determining the "X = The Unknown Quantity." The "X," of course, stands for the political imponderables, but the constants are the known or ascertainable scientific facts which can give a reality to such phrases as "Access by all States on equal terms to the resources of the world."

Hence the Conference on Mineral Resources held under the auspices of the British Association's Division of Social and International Relations held at the London School of Hygiene last week-end. And hence the idea of an "I.R.O." which was sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps, as chairman of one of the sessions.

This alphabetical device is to underline the parallel between the proposed functions of the International Resources Organisation and those of the I.L.O., that vestigial but still effective remains of the League of Nations. The I.L.O. is the hyphen between the good intentions of the old order and the imperatives of the new. The I.R.O. is the complement to it.

To some of us the idea of an International Resources Organisation, which in the words of the resolution which Sir Stafford endorsed, is conceived as "a fact-finding organisation, advisory to Governments and a contribution to world stability" is not new. It was urged in the discussions of the British Association ten years ago. Because of my interest in the scheme, I was invited to Scandinavia in 1937 to discuss it with members of the Nobel Prize Committee. It was welcomed by the French scientists, long before they were hostages of the Nazis; indeed, it was under discussion at a conference between the French and Low Countries' scientists at Liège a month before war broke out. The American scientists embraced it.

No, it is not new. Sir Francis Bacon, in 1617, made the notable feature of his "New Atlantis" a college "instituted for the interpreting of the nature and production of great and marvellous

works for the benefit of Man." Twenty years later Jan Commenius, the Czech philospher and educationist, came to England to form a "Universal College" for physical research and the development of natural resources on the same lines. A bill to establish such an International College in London was actually before Parliament when the Civil War broke out.

The "Pansophia" of Commenius was lost for 300 years. Then, on September 1st, 1939, the British Association met in Dundee. Once again the scheme was near realisation. Plans for an international organisation and the promise of substantial funds to back it were to be brought before the Council by Julian Huxley. On that Friday morning, the Director of Education for Dundee was delivering a paper. A messenger interrupted him in the middle of a sentence. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "Orders have come to evacuate Dundee." The meeting was abandoned. Scientists hurried to their war posts. The scheme and the financial promise went "down the drain." The story of Commenius had been repeated.

But, thanks to the persistence of Sir Richard Gregory, President of the wartime B.A. and still a crusader at 76, the idea was resurrected. A conference on Science and World Order at which Britain and the Commonwealth, the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., China and 22 allied and neutral countries were represented was summoned last September. That conference still finds an echo in the Departments, and the speeches, of Washington.

Independently, in the conference speeches, there was insistence on the need for the international organisation of Science. Out of it came specific proposals for an International Resources Organisation, annealed now by the white-heat of war experience and of (as Cripps pointed out), its revolutionary consequences.

Those proposals have been unofficially discussed in official quarters in Washington and have been heartily applauded. It remained for some world statesman publicly to recognise its significance. This Sir Stafford did. He endorsed the "project for an International Resources Organisation which will mobilise all the knowledge available in the world concerning raw materials and natural resources and also of the technique of their use."

"For," he added, "the world can no longer afford—as indeed we have found in our war effort—to leave this great question of natural resources and their utilisation to the haphazard methods of individual action." He also stressed that the United Nations must undertake international regulation of production and distribution both to ensure the restitution of the devastated countries and to ensure a steadily rising standard of living throughout the world.

What do we mean by "access to raw materials" which the I.R.O. aims to assist? Sir Richard Gregory, in moving the resolution, put the question vividly. All peoples, he pointed out, have equal access to the air. Science had won raw materials from air. (Haber, the non-Aryan German who died an exile, through Hitler's persecution, achieved the fixation of nitrogen from the atmosphere, provided the Germans with the fertilisers which kept them going through the four years of the First World War and, at the same time, freed the whole world from dependence on Chilean nitrates.) There are no royalty-owners, or landlords' rights, or frontiers, in the atmosphere. There is universal access.

Then, as Dr. E. F. Armstrong, F.R.S., had shown at the conference, science is gaining mastery over the minerals of the sea. Magnesium is present, one part in 800, in sea-water. A single sea-water plant will be producing 100,000 tons of magnesium, the lightest metal, by the end of this year. Britain has established three sea-water plants in the last five years. There are many other metals which are, or can, or will be, won from the sea.

But most of the minerals of the world are in geological deposits, unevenly distributed throughout the surface of the earth (the United Nations between them have "access"—subject, and very much subject, to war-transport—to all of them except mercury, which France holds to ransom). As Gregory pointed out, these deposits bear no relation to the geographical boundaries established by the military strategy of the past.

So, he pointed out, all peoples could have access on equal terms to the raw materials of the air. Any country with a coast-line can claim the mineral "Freedom of the Seas." But how are the mineral deposits, arbitrarily confined by geographical frontiers, to be freed to all the peoples of the world? How are the minerals won by scientific and technical enterprise, to which experts of every nationality have contributed, to be properly shared?

How, in other words, is Clause 4 to be made a reality, not in terms of Big Business, or even of countries which have the means to buy in the open market or the transport to carry, but of the ordinary chap who knows raw materials only in terms of the work they provide? "Access" to him, whether he is Czech steel-worker dependent on imported manganese, or a French peasant dependent on copper sulphate for his vineyard, means "Freedom from Want."

As Cripps said, the United Nations must find the equitable methods of control, but there is another, but quite indispensable, approach. That is through an International Resources Organisation.

If resources are to be conserved (and private enterprise has squandered them with appalling prodigality, leaving destruction and desolation, subsidence and slag-heaps in its tracks) they must be intelligently utilised. If reconstruction is to be rapid, if anarchic national development resulting in economic crises and wars is to be checked, there must be an international body capable of taking a comprehensive view of resources and their conservation.

But—and this is where the International Resources Organisation goes beyond the Mineral Conference at which the resolution was moved—resources are no longer limited to raw materials such as minerals, forest or agricultural products. They include the techniques by which these raw materials are processed and the new synthetic materials which are not geographically limited. They include also the scientists and technologists who discover and develop processes and new materials. Indeed, by definition recognised in the organisation of production for war, they also include the production methods by which resources are translated into the ultimate needs of the consumer.

All this was recognised in the scheme proposed for the I.R.O. It would be concerned with material resources, technical resources and human resources. Primarily it would collate all existing information as to the amount and distribution of such resources; initiate and direct surveys to establish the extent of resources not hitherto assessed, particularly in undeveloped countries; consider the extractive and productive techniques.

Beyond that, however, it would keep under review industrial and agricultural technique (a mandate on "conservation" would justify that). It would show how techniques could be improved and the productivity of backward agencies brought up to that of the most efficient. It would have to look into the patent laws and ensure the proper dissemination of scientific knowledge. It would by its prescience of new processes or scientific materials on the way, guide orderly development and ease obsolescence. It would promote new scientific and industrial development. One effective method which it could use to prevent "cornering" or suppression of new techniques or materials would be the "Pilot" factory; that is, by extending the laboratory experiment on a limited factory-scale, sufficient to prove its commercial possibilities.

The ultimate resources, however, are human ingenuity and constructive ability. I.R.O. would have to be concerned with the education and training of personnel, particularly of scientific personnel of which there is a present shortage. It would have to provide a full information service to help to break down the isolation of scientific workers from each other and from the technical workers and the general public.

A considerable part of this programme is at present being carried on by a variety of bodies, local, national and a few international, uncoordinated, scattered and unsatisfactory. A first step would be to mobilise these and supplement their work where gaps exist.

As Professor J. D. Bernal, who has contributed his clarity and wide experience to this scheme, has stressed, such a body is just as necessary to the successful prosecution of the war as it is to post-war reconstruction.

So why not recruit the ghost of Commenius, the Czech, to a Supreme Production Council?

RITCHIE CALDER

A LONDON DIARY

I REFERRED last week to the problem of Anglo-American relations in the village pub. My own observations this week have been that things are settling down very well, though the American habit of expecting whisky, which is not to be found because it has almost all been sent to America, has occasioned some ironic comment. It is just as well, in my view, that the whisky is not there, for the last two generations of Americans tend to treat alcohol too little as a social amenity and too much as an occupation. There is, however, one problem of Anglo-American relations which I regard as really serious. I hear about it from towns where the shops still have stocks of goods, which the ordinary English soldier cannot afford to buy and which the British civilian is urged to buy as seldom as possible. The Americans have a great deal of money, are used to a high standard, expect to give expensive presents to their girls, and are not likely to think much about the feelings of the local population, which would itself like the chance to buy a share in the remaining stocks of goods in the shops. Though I believe that the pay of British soldiers and the allowances to wives is one of the most urgent British problems, it is obviously impracticable to multiply the wages of the British soldier by six!—which would be necessary to bring them up to the level of the American. I have heard the suggestion that the right solution would be for the American Government to "defer" a large proportion of the pay of the American soldier so that he saves more and arouses less jealousy.

* * *

Comrades in Arms is a pamphlet composed of three talks given to junior officers and cadets about the proper relations of officers and men. That they should be given at all shows the need. This very intelligent advice springs from a mind which recognises that a great barrier exists between the officer class and the other ranks. The pamphlet begins with quotations from American observers of present Germany, who have commented on the combination of comradeship and discipline in the German Army. These talks do not contemplate anything revolutionary, but they do show a really admirable appreciation of the mind of the British soldier and of the demands he makes of his officers. It is to me both strange and depressing to hear Tommies saying exactly the same things in this war that they said in the last; to hear their praise of the occasional officer who really puts first things first, who minds about the genuine efficiency and not about the eye-wash, and to notice how often this is counteracted by the most sour and sometimes savage language about officers who neglect or tyrannise over the men and do not understand their job. I note the appearance of *Comrades in Arms* as a very real step forward in the psychology of the British Army. Officers who understand it and practise its principles will be, if not exactly "Comrades in Arms in the Soviet sense," at least very good and very popular officers.

It is very important to live a long time if you want to be a very great man. There are exceptions, from Keats to Lenin, but the rule is supported by innumerable examples such as Voltaire and Goethe and Bernard Shaw. The very great become legends as well as direct influences on their epoch. But G.B.S. would have been a towering figure even if he had never attained the awe-inspiring age of 86. To the galaxy of articles, studies, biographies, memoirs, appreciations, letters and personal reminiscences I want to add one comment that might be overlooked in the innumerable testimonials to Shaw's intellectual brilliance. I believe one of the most important things about G.B.S. is that in a life of hard hitting controversy he has never, as far as I know, made an enemy. He has aggravated many people to the verge of apoplexy, but he is so impersonal a figure and writer that his blows don't strike at the heart. It is annoying to find one's opponent side-stepping and making passes all round one; it is annoying to find one's intellectual defences shrewdly knocked aside; but the man who strikes such blows is forgiven. I believe, too, that the biographer of Shaw will have nothing to cover up. I doubt if in the whole course of his life there are any incidents which an admirer will find painful. There will be lots, of course, where he will have to admit error and mischief and misjudgment and all the rest of it, but in personal relations Shaw has always, I believe, been a model of that gentlemanly behaviour which he has so often delighted to ridicule. Few people have ever been more anonymously generous, or more personally considerate to the younger colleague, the casual acquaintance or the admiring bore.

* * *

Mr. Archibald MacLeish, now over here to organise American information is a very good poet. One of the books I most value is his *Land of the Free*, a poem illustrated with magnificent photographs of the United States in the slump. I know of no book which so expresses the human tragedy which came upon people who assumed they were free, because by tradition there was always land "further West," and who found when capitalist freedom had eaten up the land and barb-wired off the open spaces that their Constitution and Bill of Rights did not feed their bellies or guarantee them work. Anyway, Archibald MacLeish, poet, is in England in charge of American Information. In the U.S.A. Elmer Davis, journalist and radio commentator, is head of the Press Bureau, the opposite number in many respects of Brendan Bracken here. In charge of short-wave broadcasting in the U.S.A. is Robert Sherwood, the dramatist. A poet, a radio publicist and a playwright actually in responsible administrative posts! If they had been English where would these men be? MacLeish would probably have been pipeclaying gaiters; Elmer Davis would have been allowed to do a short period of broadcasting and then shut off the air for fear that he might become too popular; while Robert Sherwood, at a guess, might have been trying to persuade a theatre manager that there is room to sandwich a slice of drama between a couple of dazzling leg shows.

* * *

How far is this tradition alive or real in England? I asked myself as I followed the procession behind the body of Conrad Noel to Thaxted Church. The priests, the incense, the robes, the lanterns, the flowers, the streets lined with the village people who had so long watched or taken part in Conrad's battles, and then the great church, to my mind the loveliest in England, and the service, Catholic, Anglican, beautiful, not mournful. I cannot judge the strength of this branch of Anglo-Catholicism. In Conrad himself the tradition came alive; he perpetuated and revivified the Christian Socialist tradition of Frederick Denison Maurice and William Morris. With him it was a militant faith. I have met many disciples of Conrad, priests and laymen. But I suspect that the union he represented must always command a limited following. Authorities at least are never likely to smile on the union of aesthetic happiness and a ritual that is at once traditional and unconventional with a Socialism which is uncompromisingly applied to the events of the day. It will take a big man to succeed Conrad Noel; there will be shocked and conventional people who will hope to dim Thaxted to the obscurity of the churches and cathedrals in which they themselves officiate. I hope the Anglican Socialist tradition is strong enough to resist this and to survive in Thaxted.

* * *

In the past only the rich could afford ornate furniture, a fact on which Veblen based his theory of "conspicuous waste." But now machine-made ornament has paradoxically reversed this situation; the less the ornament, the more we usually have to pay. The poor again are the victims, though they do not know it, for most modern machine-made ornament is ugly as well as inconvenient. For these reasons one warmly welcomes the Board of Trade's initiative in setting up a Utility Furniture Committee, with excellent terms of reference. The problem is to reconcile solidity of construction with economy of labour and materials, and at the same time to obtain designs both simple and pleasing. The chairman of the Committee is Mr. Charles Tennyson, who has shown his interest in good design on the F.B.I.; Miss Elizabeth Denby, Mrs. Winborn and the Rev. Charles Jenkinson know intimately the needs of the consumer; Mr. Herman Lebus has unsurpassed knowledge of the mass-production of furniture; Mr. Gordon Russell has designed much good plain furniture for the rich; and Mr. John Gloag has an excellent and unprejudiced taste in the applied arts. "Functionalism" in furniture has been misunderstood by some enthusiasts; one of the functions of furniture is to look friendly as well as to be practical, and few of us want our sitting-rooms to look like operating theatres. Nevertheless the Committee, I suggest, would be greatly strengthened by the presence of one champion of the main contemporary idiom —Wells Coates, Dick Russell, Kit Nicholson, among designers, and a critic like Herbert Read.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to C. E. M. Joad.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

At Hope Street Church the Rev. Sidney Spencer will take as his sermon subject, "God, the Devil and Mr. Joad."—*Liverpool Daily Post.*

Not even Winston Churchill puts more into a day than did our Lord.—*Life and Work.*

Wanted an ISLAND on the Inner Hebrides, with ancient Castle preferred.—Advt. in *Oban Times.*

When M.P.s to-day discussed the treatment of British prisoners by the Japs, Major Sir Jocelyn Lucas (Cons., S. Portsmouth) said: "Is it not a fact that the treatment at Singapore was better because the Japanese commander was an old Harrow boy?"—*Evening News.*

"Make it a Balaclava charge." With this call ringing in their ears the crews of British tanks went into action.—*Daily Telegraph.*

There are certain foreign countries which we never have liked and which we never shall like, but Russia is not one of them. And such an incident as the Crimean War never really interrupted this mutual good feeling.—*Listener.*

VOX POPULI?

"Our many contacts with the public, the Services and the factories, show that there is a desire for robuster and more virile music in our programmes." *B.B.C. statement, July 22nd.*

"Frick . . . National-Socialist official . . . published edicts against jazz music and modern dancing."—*Germany Puts the Clock Back.*

Songs slushy and effeminate, which jazz dance bands disseminate
Are not allowed to emanate from Britain's studios;
Tones lacking in virility and husky with debility
Are banned by cultural decree from wartime broadcast shows.

Now stirring patriotic tunes will supersede exotic croons
By seemingly neurotic loons at mewling microphones,
With marches at a warlike pace, more fitted to a warlike race,
And manly declarations by broad-bosomed baritones.

Instead of red-hot frantic swing, seductive sweet romantic swing,
Pulsating transatlantic swing by Tin Pan Alley bards,
Dance bands henceforth will muster airs, more virile and robuster airs,
Like "Thora" and "The Trumpeter" as rendered by the Guards.

Though Forces bands may try to jazz, and though war workers fly to jazz,
They have to bid good-bye to jazz, inexorably banned;
There may be an artistic plea, but it's a euphemistic plea
To instance the authority of popular demand.

For by some law mysterious (though not till now held serious)
However deleterious, the public liked its bosh;
From old-time maudlin Boosey slush to modern boogie-woogie slush,
It's always had an appetite for sentimental tosh.

It loves those neurasthenic blues, defeatist and anæmic blues,
Emasculating scenic blues, now summarily halted.
And while on much they disagree, all listeners on this agree,
Dance music from the B.B.C. is being *gleichgeschaltet.*

SAGITTARIUS

WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS

RED tape still clogs our machinery for making war; Blimpery in its various forms (including the jolly, asinine form that is perhaps the worst) is still rife in our Services. If you doubt it, read the three stories that follow. I have them all at first hand and I vouch for their accuracy. In a way they are funny; they might be *only* funny if one could be sure that the same sort of thing goes on in Germany.

* * *

The Red Sea is 1,200 miles long, with an average width of 190 miles. It takes a ship, steaming at 10 knots, 10 days to traverse it from end to end. Throughout the voyage the ship is within easy reach of either shore. The shores of the Red Sea are composed of loose sand.

One day a British merchant ship under wartime naval control left Port Said for Aden and beyond. She passed through the Suez Canal and steamed for three days and nights without incident. Her captain kept her at a steady 10 knots, her most economical speed with regard to both fuel and time.

On the fourth morning an urgent wireless message from the naval authorities was handed to him. It ordered him to return forthwith to Suez. No explanation was given, and the captain

knew better than to ask for one. So he turned round and reached Suez after three days' steaming.

There he went ashore, reported to the authorities and asked why he had been recalled. He was told that a new regulation, issued just after he had cleared the canal, required all ships to carry sand bins on deck and in the 'tween-decks for use in case of fire. Masters would provide their own bins, in the shape of empty oil-barrels or other disused receptacles, as far as possible, to save sheet metal; but the bins must be filled and inspected before they entered the Red Sea. He had been called back to Suez to fill his bins.

* * *

A young officer of my acquaintance spent several months on guard duties in South Wales. Finding fire-watching in the docks and other non-combatant duties irksome to one of his lively spirit, he applied repeatedly for a transfer, without success. At last, however, he was informed that he had been nominated for service in the Middle East. He was given the usual leave pending embarkation and set off for home by a night train.

Before leaving his Welsh station he said good-bye to the Major commanding his detachment and to his other friends. But because he had always served on detachment and never at headquarters, he had never met the Colonel commanding the battalion. Still, his route did not lie through battalion headquarters; and having never made his C.O.'s acquaintance he thought he could dispense with the formality of a farewell call.

At 1 a.m. the train, which had covered well over 50 miles, stopped at a main line station. Second-Lt. Jones (not to give him his real name) was by then fairly comfortably asleep in his corner seat. But after a time he became dimly aware that the train was halted, and that a stentorian voice was troubling his dreams. The voice, which was that of the station loudspeaker, repeated over and over again a cry that seemed vaguely familiar. "Second-Lieutenant Jones!" it shouted. "Second-Lieutenant Jones to report at once to the station-master's office!"

Suddenly realising that he was the centre of this drama, young Jones tumbled sleepily out into the arms of an irate stationmaster, who was searching the train from door to door. "Are you Second-Lieutenant Jones?" demanded the station-master. "Well, come on quick, and get out your kit. We had orders to hold up this train until we found you. We've been hunting for you everywhere. There's a car waiting to take you straight back to headquarters."

The car came from Jones's own battalion; Jones recognised the Colonel's driver. But this pawn in the game knew nothing of the reasons for Jones's recall. He only knew that he had orders to catch that train, that he had covered the distance at top speed, arriving with a quarter of an hour in hand, and that Second-Lt. Jones was to report to the C.O.

Arriving at headquarters, Jones learnt from the Sergeant of the Guard that the C.O. wished to see him at 9 a.m. At 9 he was told that the C.O. would not be there until 11, and at 11 that he was detained at Brigade headquarters and would not come until 2 p.m. By that time poor Jones, having gone over all his recent misdeeds and balanced them against wild chances of sudden transfer or promotion, feared the worst. But when he was at last ushered into the presence, the C.O. received him with an outstretched hand.

"Ah, Jones," he said, "you're going overseas, aren't you? Well, I've never had a chance of seeing you before, and I didn't want to let you go without saying good-bye and wishing you luck. So I had you brought back, and I hope you won't forget the old battalion when you're out there."

As Jones said afterwards, "it was very nice of the old boy, though it did cost me 24 hours of my last leave." What it cost in petrol, and what the other passengers in that train would think of it, is not on record.

A friend of mine keeps in close touch with General de Gaulle's headquarters and makes a point of interviewing all interesting persons who arrive from France. One day he heard that three French fishermen from Boulogne had reached England in their boat. He contacted them and got from one of them an interesting account of life under the Germans which he made into an article, giving it the title "I come from an Invasion Port." He explained in the text that the article was an interview and signed it with his usual *nom de guerre*. He then submitted it, as he had promised to do, to the head of de Gaulle's Press service, who read it with interest, consulted de Gaulle's chief of staff, and said the article contained no harmful information and could be published as it stood.

None the less, the Editor thought it wise to submit the article for censorship. Shortly afterwards, an official of the censorship rang up urgently.

"The article by XXX, with the title 'I come from an Invasion Port,' he said, 'is not to be published *on any account*. It contains information of the greatest value to the enemy. Moreover, the Intelligence Branch of the War Office want to know how this information was obtained, and they would like to see Mr. XXX as soon as possible.'"

While XXX was still with the Editor, the telephone rang again. This time the call was for him, from the head of de Gaulle's Press service.

"*Dites donc, cher ami*," said he, "we've just had a call from the Intelligence Branch of the War Office. They seemed very upset about your article. They said it contained information valuable to the enemy, and information they themselves hadn't got. I pointed out that all the information was *about* the enemy, and that we had sent it to them a week ago, but that didn't satisfy them. Now they've rung up again to ask who you are. This time the General himself is talking to them."

General de Gaulle informed the War Office that the article was most interesting and contained nothing harmful *to us* that he could see. In any case, he said, it had his full approval. Thereupon, the War Office, nonplussed, passed the buck back to the censors, who after a further delay telephoned once more to the Editor and said they would pass the article, but a great deal would have to be cut out of it.

However, second thoughts are best, even in the censors' office sometimes. When the article was finally returned "passed for publication" only one word was changed. My friend had written: "The following story was told me by a Frenchman who recently made his way to England." The censors had struck out the word "Frenchman" and put the word "neutral" in its place. . . .

DAVID GRAHAM

CONRAD NOEL

WHEN I first knew Conrad, he was A. L. Lilley's curate in the very ugly church on Paddington Green. It is a depressing church in a depressing neighbourhood, and its only claim to fame (apart from the fact that Conrad was once one of its priests) is that Mrs. Siddons and the original of Dickens' "golden dustman" are buried in its churchyard.

In those days, I was the youngest of a group of earnest and youthful revolutionists. Superficially Conrad was not in the least earnest. He was an ecclesiastical imp. He was generally to be seen in sandals and a very worn cassock. He regarded it as part of his pastoral duty to drink beer with the bargees of the Paddington Canal, in very sordid public houses, after Evensong on Sundays. He seemed to regard life as a tremendous joke, while to the rest of us, with copies of *Fabian Essays* and the writings of Colonel Ingersoll in our pockets, life was a grim business. The man with his whole-hearted acceptance of the Catholic faith saw the joke in everything, in the evil as well as the good; we others, with our sceptical pride, rarely found fun in anything except perhaps in the speeches of Bernard Shaw.

I remember Conrad once telling me that he could never read the Collect for the clergy without an appreciative grin. The author of the prayer, he said, obviously realised that he was setting the Almighty a difficult task, so he began with flattery, "Almighty and everlasting God Who alone worketh great marvels send down upon our bishops and curates . . ."; those were grand days. Conrad had a circle of delightful friends, among them the two Chestertons, and through the years I have cherished the memory of evenings in his rooms in dingy Paddington. Conrad had a passion for music halls and we often went together to the Old Mogul in Drury Lane. And here is another memory—Conrad, rather bored by some of the turns, sitting quietly in a corner of the bar with a glass of beer by his side, reading his Breviary!—there was nothing of the *poseur* about him. He was just always himself. He had to be. I suppose that, as a young man, he was to some extent influenced by Stewart Headlam, who was devoted to the ballet and to the fight for decent schools for London children, and by Charles Marson, another priest with a naughty sense of humour. But Conrad was never another man's follower. He was a Socialist and a most pugnacious individualist. He did not know how to compromise. What he believed he believed fiercely. His religion was the source of all that he thought and felt and did. Because he was a Christian, he hated injustice and cruelty and class distinctions and smug piety, and he loved freedom and fair play and all that is comely and beautiful.

Thaxted, where he ministered for so many years, is one of the loveliest churches in England and, with his fine artistic sense, Conrad established there the most perfect and, in all respects, the most typically English celebrations of the Holy Mass in the whole Anglical communion. And it was because the Christ, whom he worshipped at the altar, was so real to him that, to the horror of the pious, he hung the Red Flag and the Sinn Fein banner on the walls of his church. He remembered the declaration, "the truth shall make you free," and since he held the truth, he was all out for freedom and vehemently on the side of the men everywhere, who were struggling to be free. He was a considerable scholar, a good writer and admirable preacher. He bore the loss of sight and the long years of illness with courage and unbroken humour.

SIDNEY DARK

IN MESS AND FIELD

THE language of officers in the Army is, in general, the language of the middle class, from which most of them come. The once well-known "Army type" is much less conspicuous than it used to be, and although it still dominates, it now dominates only in staff work and in other technicalities; it is no longer predominant, and—below a Corps headquarters, at any rate—it hardly sets the prevalent tone of an officers' mess, although it does much to modify it.

There is now far less Indian Army talk than formerly: Poona and Quetta, the Hills and the Plains, the British Raj and the Monsoon, are no longer the staple of conversation. Hindustani words have lost their imperial status, and, instead of being assiduously learnt and constantly employed, they tend, except among officers with Indian service, to be smilingly ignored or openly derided. Only two such words are now at all commonly used: *chit* and *wallah*: and even of these two, the latter is fast losing ground. Both have been current for something like a century. *Chit* is still the usual term for almost any bill, account, note, permit, authorisation, or brief memorandum. *Wallah* is employed as "chap," "fellow," or as "specialist"; for instance, a catering adviser is "the catering wallah," a camouflage officer is "the camouflage wallah." Nowadays, however, they are also "the catering

bloke (or merchant)" and "the camouflage merchant (or bloke)." *Chit* is almost jargon; *wallah* is entirely slang.

Jargon and slang form the two classes of words —and phrases—by which the speech of officers is most sharply differentiated from that of the other ranks (the N.C.O.'s and men): the other ranks rarely employ jargon, i.e. technical terms, and their slang is very different from that of the officers. Jargon is on the increase in the Army, as it is in the other combatant services. Where, of course, there is no "plain English" synonym for a technicality, that technicality is not, strictly speaking, jargon, which properly consists in the use of another—and usually it is a longer —word for a simple, generally understood word. Jargon is preferable to ignorance and confusion, but familiarity with technical terms too often and too easily leads to their far too glib use.

Here are several examples of jargon. Instead of such simplicities as "go" or "travel," *proceed* is used: instead of "Private John Smith will go on leave or to hospital" we have "Private John Smith will proceed on leave . . ." which sounds so very much more important. A "class" becomes a *category*, especially in such an order as "The officers of this unit will appear before the medical officer on Tuesday, with a view to a revision of their medical category," though the latter part of the sentence may be jargonised to "with a view to recategorisation," which awe-inspiring process may lead to *inhospitalisation* or transference to, or entry into, or reception into hospital. Of *recategorisation* and *inhospitalisation*, the tonic Mr. A. P. Herbert would, I think, exclaim, "What a word!" He would probably criticise only a shade less stringently the italicised words in the following sentence: "All reports from units will be *consolidated* in the report drawn up by the Division; the Divisional reports will be forwarded to Corps, where they will undergo *consolidation* before being submitted to Command, which will in turn consolidate the reports from the several Corps. The final consolidation will be made by the appropriate Department of the War Office." To *consolidate* is either to summarise (or abstract) or to incorporate.

Rather different is "to *liaise*," for this verb was at first frowned on by the pundits: its usefulness, its convenience—as always happens in the development of a civilised language—soon came to outweigh its objectionableness. It is, in a way, telegraphese for "to establish liaison with" and "to work in liaison with," which means little (anything?) more than "to meet, or get to know" and "to co-operate with." Here is a discreet adaptation of an actual instruction issued from a Corps headquarters: "It is necessary for the Chemical Warfare officer to arrange that Artillery units liaise with local Infantry units in order that the visiting experts from the War Office should have audiences worthy of the military rank and the technical standing of the visitors."

Liaise began as slang. "To *make one's number*" is still slang; it may be used absolutely, as in "As soon as I join my unit I must make my number at Brigade," or in reference to a person, as in "I must lose no time in making my number with one of the Staff Officers at Division"—in short, to *contact* him. ("To *contact*" is short for "to establish contact with," was originally American, and is now in common use in England; it is unfortunately displacing "to meet" or "get to know.") By the way, one "makes one's number" with one's *opposite number*, a phrase taken over from civil life. Actually the *opposite number* is the corresponding number: the *opposite number* to a Brigade Intelligence Officer for instance, is the Battalion Intelligence Officer on the one hand, the Divisional Intelligence Officer on the other.

Having made one's number with one's opposite number (or numbers), one "continues the good work" by *laying on* this or that activity. Army officers never arrange or appoint anything; they "lay it on." As *making one's number* presumably comes from telephony, so *laying on* would seem to derive from the noble trade of plumbing. The people that can safely "lay on" almost anything are *topsides*, those who are at the head of a department, of a specialist corps, or of an arm (for instance, the Royal Engineers) of the Service. "Topsides will turn it down cold," you often hear it said of a valuable but unorthodox proposition.

It is from *topsides* that the choicest reprimands come! An ordinary reprimand is a *raspberry* (often referred to by other ranks as a *rarzer*), which has been adopted from that form of civilian disapproval which one hears in the gallery of a theatre. "There'll be a bunch of raspberries issued over that flop at the last exercise" (the new word for manœuvres), I once heard a much-harassed Staff Officer say with a mournful shake of the head. A severe reprimand is a *rocket*, which blows the victim (who, inevitably, has *blotted his copy-book*) sky high, and an especially severe one is either an *imperial rocket* or an *outsize in rockets*. In the mess, disapproval is indicated in the phrase *to take a poor—a very poor—view of* a thing. Praise, which is rare, very seldom exceeds the effusiveness of "Nice work, Jones!": normally, however hard or however well one may work, one is merely *carrying on* or "doing one's duty"; if you exceed your duty and fail, you receive a "rocket" (generally imperial), and if you succeed, you receive a mild reproof of the "It's magnificent, but it's not war" type.

ERIC PARTRIDGE

BRITTEN ON DEATH

Our reactions to the idea of death become simpler in times when that event tends to be sudden rather than gradual. Feelings become less mixed, love and admiration remain whole, self-pity shows for the self-indulgence it is. This astringency makes for the kind of single-pointed attitude which results in considerable works of art. At the Albert Hall, on July 22, many among the audience must have felt that the fact underlying the experiences of the last three years had at last been given a satisfying form.

Benjamin Britten's *Sinfonia da Requiem* is not, apparently, his most recent work, but it is unquestionably the most mature we in this country have yet heard. Proportions are among the last qualities an artist learns how to control, and it is a tribute to the composer that, although his symphony only took twenty-four minutes to run, one felt one had assisted at a large work. This was the result, partly of a true concentration (as opposed to the meagreness that often does duty for it in modern music), partly of the emotional structure. The symphony is in three connected sections: a *Lacrymosa* in slow six-eight, which associates the swaying of a *barcarolle* with the bodily movement characteristic of grief; a *Dies Irae*, in which the superficial horror of death is expressed in a kind of *Danse Macabre*; and a final *Requiem Aeternam*, where the original swaying of six-eight is augmented to three-four, and the river becomes the ocean. The ship of death sails straight for us, under full sail, towers huge above our coracle, then sweeps peacefully on into the distance.

This composition has an originality that achieves complete success through another element of artistic maturity: the ability to build up a single theme into a long homogeneous sequence without sitting down or introducing foreign material. This is most remarkable in the first movement, where the birth of the melody recalls the gradual awakening at the beginning of Mahler's Ninth Symphony. Yet this is no mere imitation. Britten has admired Mahler, as no doubt he has admired other composers; but the first and last movements of his symphony do not *sound* like Mahler, any more than the second sounds like Stravinsky or Bartok. For unlike Shostakovich, to whose meditations on life and death we listened recently, Britten has evolved his own style—an indubitable voice we hear for the first time in this symphony.

It is not so much a question of melodic invention (the material of this work is reduced to the minimum), as of harmony and orchestration. Britten favours a strong tonic—in this case D—round which he builds a reasonable polytonal structure that looks back beyond Bach to the sixteenth-century French and Italian masters. The revolution effected by Mozart and Beethoven has here been by-passed—at least where some of the elements of composition are concerned.

The instrumentation follows suit—as it did in Berlioz's case. A large orchestra is used with sureness and economy, and the score does not flatter the eye. The score reveals a preference for using the strings and wind in self-contained groups, a technique which obviates unnecessary doubling and mixing of tones, as well as those meaningless contrapuntal voices stuffed in *après coup* to give an effect of mass and make the score look more impressive. This excellent "French" taste has its reward in a sound that is consistently beautiful and original, and in climaxes that really are massive, strong and—where that is meant—tranquil.

A recording of this extraordinary work imposes itself. If one is being made in America, a matrix should be imported. A single performance is emphatically not enough—except perhaps to emphasise the fact that England is now producing a real musical renaissance; for no other country in the world can boast so many living composers of the first order.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

MORE SHAKESPEARE

"Othello," at the New Theatre.
"Henry IV. Part I," at the Raynes Park County School.
"The Springtime of Others," at the Arts Theatre Club.

A foreign accent makes Mr. Valk, in his more emotional passages, quite incomprehensible. One is tempted to beat about the bush, but this is the central fact about the Old Vic *Othello*. I admired Mr. Valk's performance in *Thunder Rock*. I should like to see him play John Gabriel Borkman, he is an exceptional actor; but even if he had the genius of Kainz or Talma, I should not wish to hear him trying to speak English verse. A few years ago, when a Russian actress was deluded into playing Cleopatra in what she thought was English, one fled from the theatre before the first interval. This performance of *Othello* is too interesting to allow of such an escape. Mr. Frederick Crooke's decor is very sweet on the eye. He has thrown the action back seventy years and used costumes reminiscent of Giorgione. The lighting, too, is enormously skilful, though too uniformly sombre. The Moor was Governor of torrid Cyprus, not of Murmansk in midwinter. The Othello is rightly made up as a blackamoor; to beglamour him into a Valentino sheik, as has been usual since Kean, turns Brabantio's talk of witchcraft into nonsense. But the producer, Mr. Gellner, often succumbs to a passion for over-emphasis. The Doge dodders, Bianco is hysterical, the wounded Montano by exaggerated agonies deflects our attention from the chief actors. Such *übermässigkeit* destroys the proportions of the play.

The Iago of Mr. Bernard Miles dominates the production. We do not understand why everyone thinks him honest, but this is a fault common to almost all Iagos. (I suggest that he ought to be fair, jovial-looking, and even a little plump, since this physique is thought in this country to betoken honesty.) Mr. Miles, however, does suggest the promoted ranker—which would be all to the good, if he could also suggest the grandeur of villainy, the aesthetic interest in moving human beings like chessmen. Great critics have used poetic imagination to discover in him the perpetrator of an *acte gratuit*, like the murderer in Gide's *Caves du Vatican*. The interpretation is valid in the study, but immensely difficult to realise in the theatre. Mr. Miles is almost absurdly villainous a villain—he makes the audience laugh—and, brilliant as is his performance, he never achieves grandeur. Nor indeed does Miss Hermione Hannen as Desdemona: she is exceedingly pretty, except in the last scene, where she is submerged in a blonde cascade of a wig; she speaks the verse beautifully—and for this we are profoundly grateful—but she never shows the exceptional strength of will on which her tragedy depends. Othello, again, is not twisted steel, but melting tallow. The essential firmness of the three protagonists has been sentimentalised, so that the tragedy dwindles into a *fait-divers*. Miss Freda Jackson, as Emilia, alone attains the full stature of her role. I look forward to seeing her playing lead

Mr. Laurence Payne was an excellent Cassio, and the rest of the caste did their work very well.

A performance of *Henry IV, Part I*, by the boys of Raynes Park County School, made an agreeable interlude. To act Shakespeare is the best way of getting to enjoy Shakespeare; but, for the audience, *Henry IV* is not the best play in which to see schoolboys. They can throw much light on the proper playing of Shakespeare's women, since these parts were carefully written to fit the limitations and potentialities of boy-actors. In *Henry IV, Part I*, women have little to do. Mr. Frank Beecroft's production was very lively: the lighting and scenery excellently contrived. Falstaff (D. Cooper) and Hotspur (S. C. Honcker) showed themselves very intelligent, articulate and spirited. Prince Hal (D. L. Nightingale) was delightfully dandified, Glendower and Bardolph skilfully used the accents of Wales and Cockayne. But the most enlightening moment was when Lady Mortimer (A. H. L. Williams) sang a Welsh song. The touching treble took us back to a Jacobean playhouse.

I should like to be enthusiastic about *The Springtime of Others*. Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, I know, thinks very highly of the play, and it is certainly far more interesting than most plays that we are treated to. M. Jean-Jacques Bernard takes a situation that a Bataille or a Bernstein would enjoy translating into tirades: a woman falling in love with her son-in-law. But M. Bernard never states the facts—he is content to imply them, and trust to the intelligence of the audience. It is not even clear at what point, or how completely, the Phaedra becomes conscious of her passion. The best scene shows her trying to separate the young couple by agreeing with and fostering her daughter's momentary anger. There are clumsy improbabilities; would any wife leave her husband because he has spent a night away from her, without at least waiting to hear his explanation? There is no poetic quality to hide such defects. But the great weakness of the play is that the characters have no life or individuality apart from their situation. This is doubtless a French tradition, as opposed to the tradition of the English, Russian and Norwegian stage. But it demands virtuoso performance in a particular style. At the Arts Theatre Club a gallant attempt is made. Miss Isolde Denham is excellent as the daughter; Mr. Dennis Price, with the handicap of too youthful an appearance, acts with modesty and dignity. But the play depends on the mother, and Miss Mary Hinton—so admirable in *Asmodée*—gives an interpretation more thoughtful than convincing. Reversing the usual fault of actresses, she makes her part too unsympathetic—so that the audience laughs when she proclaims her affection. But the play only becomes effectively tragic, if we are made to sympathise with her distress. One tiny point: Miss Hinton pronounces French exquisitely, and others could learn from her how to pronounce the name "Maurice." A curtain-raiser by Chehov affords a whale of a part for Mr. Alec Clunes, who puts up a very honourable show in it.

ROGER MARVELL.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Exhibition of Books and Manuscripts, at 15 St. James's Square.

Visitors to St. James's Square will find this exhibition in the north-west corner, next to the London Library. A few of the volumes and manuscripts are under glass—a Book of the Hours, for example, in the front room, so exquisite that the eye returns to its opened page. More tangible, if less ravishing, are *Das Kapital* (but for the title, it might be any thesis) inscribed in the author's hand, a first edition of *Fleurs du Mal*, containing the forbidden poems, and a tiny paper-covered *Shropshire Lad*, with corrections by Housman. The manuscripts range from the first three books of the "Essay on Man," and Freud's Essay on Psychoanalysis, fair-copied in a large reassuring hand, to a letter from George Moore on hotel notepaper, and the much corrected and decorated pages of *Brave New World*. Lord Berners, with performances in three arts, has a stand to himself. There are drawings by "Max," with a text flowing round, a portfolio of Leech, manuscripts of Byron and Matthew Arnold, Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey. The takings of this exhibition, arranged by Lord Rothschild, go to the Duke of Gloucester's Red Cross and St. John's Fund, and the collection will be sold for the same object in October.

"The Tuttles of Tahiti," at the Regal

The Tuttles are a lazy, large, dilapidated family living in Tahiti, and at the head of them, no less large, lazy and dilapidated is Charles Laughton. He wears a straw hat with a flower-wreath for a hat-band, there's a lax swagger in his walk, his cane is gold-topped, his shirt hangs out in front, and his big toe begins to writhe when he's embarrassed. His mismanagement of the Tuttle finances provides the ups and downs of the film. Everything at one point is staked on a wonderful cock-fight—and lost; a windfall brings affluence, then this fortune too vanishes—the bailiffs arrive during a wedding-feast to carry away the large brass bedstead. All ends, of course, happily, in graceful indigence. The junketings, the sentiment and local colour of this firm are rather thin, and Laughton's role in it gives scope less to the actor of genius than to the most illustrious of Hollywood's dancing bears. However, it's agreeable entertainment of a not very high order.

Correspondence

THE INDIAN IMPASSE

SIR,—May I criticise—bluntly, to save space—your last week's leader on the Indian situation?

You expose forcibly the impossibility of granting the latest Congress demand—its impracticability, ambiguity and disingenuousness, though you are too polite to use that word. But your proposed response to it is that we should make a further offer, going beyond the Cripps plan. That would encourage the Congress belief that the way to force concessions from the British is to behave badly and to threaten worse behaviour if its demands are refused. Do not recent events rather point to the conclusion that the Cripps offer went too far; relied more upon the generosity, common sense and enlightened self-interest of the major Indian parties than they, or at least Congress, deserved? We cannot withdraw anything we have promised. But the main difference between the Cripps offer and the former promise of Dominion status conditional upon a settlement of the constitutional problem acceptable to all the main sections, was that the Cripps offer was of a particular form of settlement which was a compromise between the wishes of the Muslim League, who want complete Pakistan, and the Congress Hindus who will have none of it. The rejection of the offer leaves us free to think again, within the rather narrow limits imposed by previous pledges. Some writers are assuming that the Cripps offer must stay open indefinitely. But why? It was devised to secure the full co-operation of all Parties in the war effort. It failed. Why should we feel committed to it and so give the rival parties no motive to give fuller help or less hindrance in the hope of strengthening their claims to have their wishes more fully met in the final settlement? It is as though we were to announce to Europe a plan of post-war settlement and pledge ourselves to maintain it unchanged whether the nations concerned behave in the meantime as allies, neutrals, or enemies. This would be a magnificent gesture of impartiality, but it would not help to win the war. Yet to lose it will mean ruin to India as well as to Europe. Even victory holds out a poor prospect for both if the settlement leaves India dominated by a party as irresponsible and irreconcilably hostile as Congress is showing itself. Though Messrs. Gandhi, Nehru and Azad are otherwise very different from Hitler, their reactions to appeasement seem much the same.

As for your proposed improvements on the Cripps offer, my gorge rises at the suggestion that we should not only make a fresh, unconditional pledge to India of Dominion status with full rights of secession "immediately after the war," but should ask the United Nations to guarantee the pledge. What do these nations know about the difficulties implied in the words "India" and "immediately"? And if Congress leaders believe that we cannot be trusted to keep our word without coercion, why virtually admit the charge? We shall not win either peace or respect by yielding to threats and insults.

ELEANOR F. RATHBONE

The House of Commons

[We have always regarded the future of India and the Dependent Empire as international and not as British domestic problems.—ED., *N.S.&N.*]

ANTI-SEMITISM

SIR,—Miss Engle pronounces the following opinion on the Polish Jews:

"The Jews of Poland, on the whole, I have found penny-grubbing, cunning and given to circumlocution, reflecting the life of the impoverished Jewish masses in the Polish ghettoes, restricted and exploited by a corrupt and graft-demanding officialdom."

The above-mentioned statement does not correspond to the facts and is, therefore, harmful to the cause of Polish Jewry. Polish Jewry, amounting to three and a half million consists, in almost two-thirds of workers, artisans and others earning their livelihood by their own work. The Jewish working class in Poland has developed a modern Labour movement during the last half a century, and had been carrying on together with the Polish working class a very brave fight against the Tsarist oppressors before the last war, despite that many thousands had paid for it with their lives on the Tsarist gallows and in the Siberian exile. Would Miss Engle call those people endangering their lives for the ideal of liberty "penny-grubbing and cunning"?

Actually Polish Jewry has developed, during the short period of the Polish independence, very high values of its national culture. Thanks to its devotion and generosity, Polish Jewry had been able to create a highly efficient educational system of its own. It has developed its own press, literature, theatre, and all the other attributes of its national culture to a very high degree. The Polish Jews have fought for their rights with dignity deserving real respect. This is worth mentioning particularly these days when Polish Jewry is passing through a hell of sufferings, showing however, in its struggle against the oppressors such pride and dignity that could by no means be the attributes of "penny-grubbing and cunning" people.

While agreeing with Miss Engle that the cultural level of the Jews depends also on the cultural level of the peoples among whom they live, I think her statement wrongs the Polish people because the Jews in Poland have been living first of all among the Polish peasantry and the Polish urban population who also fought against the officialdom as far as it had been reactionary. (By the way, it is not true that the main features of the Polish officialdom in independent Poland were corruption and bribery.)

I understand that Miss Engle intends to solve also the problem of Polish Jewry by establishing a Jewish State and she finds it "very simple." May I say that in this respect, too, Miss Engle's statement is unwittingly prejudicial to Polish Jewry? We Polish Jews do not consider ourselves strangers or guests in Poland. After having lived in Poland for nearly 1,000 years, we consider ourselves "natives" quite as well as the others. The idea that the Jews are strangers in the countries where they have lived for many generations, and that the only solution of the Jewish problem is not the recognition of the above-mentioned fact and the grant of absolute equality of rights as citizens (and as a national minority in countries like Poland where they constitute a compact mass of people with their own cultural values), but that they have to leave their respective countries—has always been advertised by the reactionaries and has become the backbone of the anti-Semitic ideology of the Hitlerite movement. As a matter of fact you will find no difficulties in coming to an agreement with the most reactionary and anti-Semitic parties on the solution of the Jewish problem by means of emigration to their "own State."

Even if such Jewish State were established it would not solve the problem of millions of Jews in Poland and in other countries of Eastern Europe. It would be too naive to think that many millions who have struck deep roots in the soil and in the society of the countries where they have lived for many centuries,

will simply pack up and leave because someone has officially proclaimed that somewhere a Jewish State has been established. S. ZYGIELBOJM

Member of the Polish National Council
12 Porchester Square, W.2.

[We have received the following letter from Miss Engle: "I have been most concerned to learn that in my letter which appeared in your number of July 11th, my reference to certain sections of Jewry were misunderstood, and, in fact, has brought acute concern to Polish-Jewish circles in particular. I am extremely sorry to have caused pain to a community which has been the longest suffering of all Jewish communities; and which, in spite of overwhelming handicaps, has been the reservoir of Jewish learning and inspiration for generations. Nor do I wish to be responsible for casting a slur on a people who, even to-day, in the midst of all their sufferings in the ghetto hells of Poland, are still working for Zionism, and are even managing to collect money to buy land in Palestine, where they hope one day to create a better future, if not for themselves, at least for their children."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

PEASANT PROBLEM

SIR,—"Had we invested a few million pounds in buying up Bulgarian produce . . . we would have prevented Germany obtaining the economic stranglehold from which she passed to political murder." I quote from Maurice Edelman's review of *There's a German Just Behind Me* in your issue of July 25. If the NEW STATESMAN, and the newer statesmen who now seek to design a new Europe, wish to know how to invest some post-war millions profitably in the region between the Bohemian Forest and the Black Sea, they will find the prospectus of a remarkable enterprise in the "Peasant Programme" signed on July 9th in London. It was my privilege to countersign it along with fourteen Peasant Leaders from seven countries in Central and Southern-Eastern Europe, as a friendly British witness; and I commend it to anyone who wishes to know how we can prevent Germany from regaining "the economic stranglehold" and passing thence once more to political murder. This Peasant Programme is at once a far-reaching practical plan of reconstruction, and an impressive demonstration of their unity of purpose given by men who are both nationalists and good Europeans.

The Athenæum, S.W.1. A. F. WHYTE

VANSITTARTISM

SIR,—Your campaign against "Vansittartism" is endangering the future peace of Europe by perpetuating the dangerous belief in the existence of a "better Germany" which will settle down to a peaceful life after the defeat of the Third Reich.

1. You are mistaken in your reference to the uses which German propaganda made of "Black Record." For more than a year the German press carefully abstained from quoting Lord Vansittart and if to-day Dr. Goebbels is making a more extensive use of his writing it is not due to the desire to impress the Germans—who openly boast of the bestialities they commit—but to supply the detractors of Lord Vansittart in this country with ammunition and thus make confusion about Germany worse confounded.

2. In your campaign against Lord Vansittart you seem to ignore all the evidence which decisively confirms the truth of "Black Record." Thus for instance you have not yet reviewed Professor F. W. Foerster's *Europe and the German Question*, published over a year ago, which fully confirms everything that Lord Vansittart ever wrote about Germany. You also ignore a more recent contribution to the controversy, namely, a little book *Gollancz in the German Wonderland*, published last month by two German Socialists, Messrs. Geyer and Loeb. Is it because while attacking Lord Vansittart as a representative of the "ruling class" you cannot possibly attack Professor Foerster, a great scholar, a great Christian, a great pacifist and a great German, who is an outcast to-day?

3. On the other hand, in order to support your argument against Lord Vansittart, you recommend an exhibition organised in London by the so-called "Free Germans" as proof that we have "Allies inside Germany," although this exhibition is a fraud without a single exhibit to prove the existence of any effective underground activity or sabotage in Germany to-day.

4. During the ten years of National Socialism in Germany, all the good Germans who actively opposed him have been either murdered or are dying in concentration camps, and we are confronted to-day with a nation of homicidal maniacs and your readers should know that it was not Lord Vansittart, but a German pacifist, who for the last fifty years dedicated his life to the cause of saving Germany, who laid it down as a condition of a future peace: "*Let the criminals be sure that they will not escape punishment. As for the German people which has approved and abetted all their crimes and allowed such men to rule them, it will not indeed be tormented and starved; but since it has proved incapable of governing itself, it will be subjected to the most rigorous international control.*" (F. W. Foerster, "Europe and the German Question"; p. 430).

Primrose Hill, N.W.3. F. B. CZARNOMSKI

THE SECOND FRONT

SIR,—Will Col. Garsia persuade his war strategy group to turn its attention to the following problems, treating them in exactly the same way that it has treated the problem of the Second Front in Europe at present?

The capture of (1) Norway, (2) Crete by the Germans.

The capture of (1) Singapore, (2) Burma by the Japanese.

Will Col. Garsia then tell us whether his "group" would have advised the undertaking of these four projects? GEO. A. HORNE

Woodberry Lane,
Rowlands Castle.

SUCH WAS MY SINGING

SIR,—It seems to me queer that, in these days of paper shortage particularly, your reviewer, Mr. Richard Church, should take up most of the small space in his so-called "review" of Mr. Robert Nichols's book, *Such Was My Singing*, in personal speculation as to why Mr. Nichols's output has not been larger. I can tell him why. It is because of ill-health.

It does not seem to me fair, under the circumstances, that the public, reading this review and perhaps unacquainted with Robert Nichols's work, should get the impression that here is a poet of very little account who talks very big. Mr. Church quotes a few of the worst lines he can find in the book, choosing to ignore such poems as "The Sprig of Lime," "The Naids' Music," or "Spanish Tryptich," all of which (if Mr. Nichols had but written these three) would place him in the front rank of English poets.

Since when has a poet been admired for the *amount* of poems he wrote? NORAH NICHOLS

EXCHANGE OF POPULATION

SIR,—I do not believe in compulsory evacuation of Arabs from Palestine in order to make room for Jewish settlers. But for truth's sake I would interpose a word in exchange of views between Mrs. Dugdale and Miss White. A reference to the "fertile and empty land beyond Jordan" drew from Miss White the remark that the land is "already overpeopled in its watered, and therefore cultivable, areas." Now Transjordan is a country about the same size as Palestine, and has less than a quarter of the population. Its watered and cultivable area is sparsely cultivated. The ruins of the Hellenistic cities of the Decapolis show that, where to-day a few hundred squatters live, there were thousands of citizens in the early centuries of the era. When the mandate was given, it might have been said with more reason, but not with more fairness, that the fertile part of Palestine was overpeopled. Yet in twenty years the population of the country has doubled, and the standard of life for all has been immeasurably raised. In truth the country beyond Jordan has room for many more Arabs and many Jews, without involving any question of forced exchange of population.

NORMAN BENTWICH

"Hollycot," Vale of Health,
Hampstead.

A VOUCHER

SIR,—I have just received a voucher in my section certified, checked and countersigned in the following manner:

(i) The voucher is in duplicate.

(ii) Signed by Officer in Charge of Flight. ????????? F/O.

(iii) Signed by Commanding Officer. OOOOOOOO F/Lt. for S/Ldr.

(iv) Certified debited to the account, etc. CCCCCCCCC F/Lt.

(v) Entered on Tally Card. MMMMMM with date.

(vi) Posted in Stores Acctg. Section. KKKKKKKK with date.

(vii) Entered in Pay Ledger. NNNNNNNN.

(viii) Signed by Equipment Officer. EEEEEEEEEE P/O.

(ix) Signed by airman. GGGGGGG.

There is a remarkable note that the signing of this form is purely voluntary.

What would you say that this voucher vouched? Total loss of equipment? A large item of airman's personal clothing? No, sir, here is the item:—"Badges, Cap, O.A., 1, 2d." (Twopence).

Tallyho! On to Tobruk!

CORPORAL

Pay Account Section,
R.A.F. Station.

THE WAY TO WIN THE WAR.

SIR,—We are told by Mr. Oliver Lyttelton that these are the gravest days we have known. We are fighting for our very lives! Accordingly it has recently been impressed upon all the military personnel, male and female, stationed within a certain area, that a vital aspect of this struggle for freedom and democracy is—*Saluting!*—slackness in the saluting of staff cars being especially commented upon. Recognition of the value of this exchange of courtesies is evidently essential to victory. To this end hundreds of soldiers and A.T.S., along with their officers, paraded with due ceremony, whilst a sleek, high-powered, chauffeur-driven (but otherwise empty) automobile, passed along their ranks, with the pennant of *high authority* flying, thereby ensuring that failure to acknowledge its exalted presence may never be again excused. A tale told by an idiot! Oh, no! Simply a true story, yet not fully told. At least two hundred man hours lost in one small section. Precious gallons of petrol wasted, and cold anger stirred in the hearts of men and women, who, though thus insulted, yet offer their lives for the cause *they* understand and the England *they* love. What must the merchant seamen think, who risk their lives for these Brass Hats? THE WIFE OF ONE OF THESE SOLDIERS

FIRST-CLASS

SIR,—Does not Mr. Priestley ignore the essential point that, whereas cinema going is purely a relaxation, railway travel is more or less of a necessity? If my accustomed seats at the cinema are full, and I don't want to pay more, I go home; but if there are no Third Class seats on a train I cannot as easily absent myself from work or give up a long planned holiday. If cinema attendance were as nearly compulsory as railway travel, and accommodation as scarce, the same anger and resentment would be felt, and if I had to stand for three hours in a corridor, the fact that the First Class compartments were called "Bigger Seats," or even "Specially for the Stout," would make no difference whatever to my feelings, so long as those seats were empty. The travelling public, I think, needs a physician (or perhaps a judge) even more than a psychiatrist; why not either abolish first-class fares altogether, or collect, if practicable, an extra charge during the journey from those actually occupying the seats? MARY LAUTERBACH

BRING OUT YOUR DEAD
PAPER

BOOKS IN GENERAL

BOULANGER is now hardly even a name, I suspect, to most English readers. But fifty-four years ago it seemed likely that this general would become dictator of France. The story is worth retelling, because it suggests a topical parallel. I am not referring to Pétain: he is indeed a general who seized autocratic power, but in opposite circumstances. Whereas he represented the acceptance of defeat, Boulanger incarnated the hope of victory. He now appears in history as a Hitler who failed.

The France of 1886 resembled in many ways the Germany of 1933. It was fifteen years since a humiliating defeat. The republican régime installed by that defeat was working badly, and incurring increasing unpopularity. National feelings were enfevered. Enough of debates, enough of corruption, enough of a delusive liberalism, enough of the Jews. Eyes turned to the lost provinces, and the discontented were pinning their hopes to a Man. But more important than all these similarities are two differences. Boulanger, it turned out, had neither the courage nor the political skill of Hitler; and the French cared profoundly, as the Germans have never cared, for liberty.

In April, 1885, the French learnt that the new Minister of War was a General Boulanger. Little was known of him. The son of an attorney who had incurred the censure of his profession, Ernest Boulanger—he later preferred to be known as Georges—was born in 1837. He became a professional soldier, was wounded in Algeria, in the Italian campaign at Magenta, again in Indo-China and in the Franco-Prussian war. His appointment to the War Office was a sop to the Radical leader, Clemenceau. He rapidly executed a number of reforms that increased the comfort of the soldiers and the glamour of the army. The popularity thus earned was further fostered by a sedulous pursuit of publicity. He lacked all elevation of heart or mind, but vulgarity can be a help to the ambitious. With his tanned skin, reddish beard and blue eyes, he cut a fine figure on his black horse (which only a few experts noticed was not a thoroughbred). In July, 1885, he dismissed from the Army the Duc d'Aumale, uncle to the Royalist Pretender: and the next day he received an ovation at a review in the Bois. The public fancy was caught by a music-hall song with the refrain "Moi j'faisais qu'admirer Not' brav' Général Boulanger," and rather to his surprise he found himself a popular hero. Monsieur Thiers was dead, so was Gambetta; the position of chief was vacant.

In April, 1887, a frontier incident provoked a war-scare; and Boulanger, by a rash speech, won the reputation, quite undeserved, of having made Bismarck retreat. In May the government fell; Rouvier formed a new Cabinet without Boulanger, and consigned him to an unimportant command in the Auvergne. A mob accompanied him to the station, enthusiasts lay on the rails to prevent the train taking him away, and shouts of "A l'Elysée" invited him to effect a *coup d'état*. He refused the invitation, but his photograph was now used to embellish every type of article: he was even the King of Hearts on playing cards. Clemenceau, jealous or justly apprehensive, turned to attack him. Hitherto Boulanger had represented two ideas—radicalism and anti-Germanism (le Général Revanche). But Royalists and Bonapartists had joined with democrats in these Paris manifestations, and the prestige of the Republic was falling. It had survived only because its opponents had been divided, unfortunate, and unwise. Chambord had refused the throne rather than accept the tricolor. But now Chambord was dead, and the Prince Imperial had been killed in Zululand, so that the Orleanist Comte de Paris rallied the support of many Bonapartists as well as of almost all the Royalists. Boulanger became a focus of every discontent. The Radicals who wanted the abolition of the Senate still thought him their man. He had already in secret visited Prince Napoleon in Switzerland, but the Empress Eugénie, who had the money, would not give her support. In the spring of 1888, however, he made a pact with the Royalists. Henceforward Boulanger was caught in a tangle of deceit. While calling his followers "le parti républicain nationaliste," he promised each section of them what they desired. (But, to his great credit, he refused firmly any truck with the anti-Semitism, then widely epidemic, as so often in unstable societies, among knaves and fools.) The chauvinist Republicans Déroulède and Rochefort were his noisiest supporters, but Boulanger needed what the Left could not provide—money. For he now engaged upon an electoral campaign, standing for each seat that became vacant so as to be summoned to power by a gradual plebiscite.

President Grévy had been obliged to resign by a scandal involving his son-in-law, and the parliamentary regime was further weakened. Boulanger was elected successively in the departments of the Dordogne and the Nord. The Duchesse d'Uzès offered the Comte de Paris three million francs with which to back Boulanger and the Pretender grudgingly accepted. A duel in which he was wounded by a civilian gave Boulanger's enemies a laugh but did not affect his popularity. With the money and the votes of the Royalists he won in August three more elections. Clemenceau had founded the "Ligue des droit de l'homme," republican and anti-clerical, and epitomised in a phrase one permanent superiority of democracy: "Gloire aux pays où l'on discute et honte aux pays où l'on ne parle pas."

For Boulanger, the situation looked highly promising. Though the new President, Sadi Carnot, unlike Hindenburg, was loyal to the Republic, he was a nonentity who seemed to typify its feebleness. Nor were any of them either popular or conspicuous for ability and determination. Clemenceau was not in office; the names of Goblet, Floquet and Constans—though the last, it turned out, possessed tactical acumen—have left no great mark in French history. The Republic itself had no glamour; an ill-framed constitution seemed to proclaim it a mere interlude or make-shift. The Church, the professions—particularly the Army, and a majority of the great financiers disliked the Republican idea; and those to whom the idea appealed were, especially in the towns, alienated from the actual Republic, which pursued neither of the Jacobin objects, equality and patriotic glory.

So far, then, Boulanger's situation has many similarities with that of Hitler before 1933: the young saw in him an ideal, the rich thought they had found in him a tool. "What typifies and sets in action popular heroes is not so much their own will as the image that the populace forms of them." This was the verdict a few years later of the disillusioned Barrès, whose *L'appel au soldat* provides a brilliant eye-witness account of the Boulangiste movement. (The General, who now seems as absurd as Hitler did when he first broke upon the scene, was keenly supported by both Barrès and Anatole France, the two most brilliant young writers of the time.) But the real Boulanger corresponded too little to the popular image. He had no understanding of his situation—nothing indeed but a geniality of manner and a brainless confidence in his star. He was moreover the least adventurous of adventurers.

On January 27, 1889, in an election for the Paris constituency of Clignancourt he defeated the government candidate by an immense majority. The streets were packed with his supporters, again crying "A l'Elysée." From a restaurant in the Place de la Madeleine Boulanger looked out upon the delirious mob. "The Empire died of its origins," he declared—he had been brought up in horror of Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état*. "But it lasted for eighteen years!" one of his supporters answered. "In six months I can get power by constitutional methods," he decided, and slipped home to bed. Here a word must be placed about Marguerite Vicomtesse de Bonnemains. Boulanger is described as having in his eyes "a veiled look" that reminded people of Napoleon III, and like Napoleon III he was devoted to the pleasures of the alcove. After many adventures he was during the critical years passionately in love with Marguerite de Bonnemains. There are stories that she was an agent of the Government or even of Bismarck, but it is doubtful whether she even tried to influence her lover. What is certain is that she did influence him, in the sense that he would not risk being separated from her. And on April 1 he fled from France. The Government had arranged for rumours to reach him of his imminent arrest; the threat, which they might not have dared to execute, sufficed. Unable to face the possibility of solitude in a cell, Boulanger escaped with Mme. de Bonnemains to the cosiness of a Brussels hotel. No preparations had been made to counter a *coup*, but the Republic was saved.

Boulanger moved to London, where he took a furnished house in Portland Place and was introduced by Lord Randolph Churchill to the Prince of Wales. His place, in hearts and headlines, was usurped by the newly completed Eiffel Tower—already he had shrunk into a figure of fun. The September elections on which he had been counting were disastrous: only 44 Boulangistes were elected and 140 Royalists against 366 Republicans. The General's money gave out—the Duchesse d'Uzès was not interested in supporting a poltroon, and he left London for Jersey. His only chance, Déroulède told him was to come to Paris and risk arrest—"Paraître ou disparaître." Boulanger refused. "You are known to have military courage," said Déroulède, "But civilian courage you lack." Ignominy was added to defeat, for a supporter betrayed the whole squalid story of Boulanger's dealings with the Royalists and Bonapartists. The General and his mistress drifted to Brussels, where in July, 1891, she died. In September he shot himself on her grave. His will directed that only the name "Georges" should appear on his tombstone, and the words: "How was I able to live for two and a half months without you?" One of his most ardent supporters provided a more permanent epitaph: "He promised to be a Caesar, he lived a Cataline, and he died a Romeo."

Boulangisme divided France across all party lines: authoritarians and chauvinists, alike of the Left and the Right, thought they had found in him their man. (I say "chauvinists" rather than "patriots" because it was too early for *la revanche*; if Boulanger had gained power, Bismarck would have inflicted a certain defeat upon a France without an ally.) It is ironical that in the following year the Panama scandal exposed the worst weakness of the regime: two financiers of German origin, Baron de Reinach and Cornelius Herz, had corrupted over a hundred deputies. If the exposure had happened earlier, Boulanger must have succeeded. Now its victory over Boulangisme had so strengthened the Republic that it survived this malady, and the consequent Dreyfus affair; and in due course recovered the lost provinces.

The best accounts of Boulangisme are in Barrès' *L'appel au Soldat* and Adrien Dansette's *Le Boulangisme*. Mr. D. W. Brogan's masterly *Development of Modern France* also contains an admirable summary of it. The story recalls a warning made by Anacharsis Clootz during the Revolution: "France, méfie-toi des individus!" Neglecting this advice, the French people accepted two Napoleons, each of whom left France smaller than he found it. They also, in despair, accepted Pétain. But they would not accept Boulanger. And while his inferiority to Hitler both in audacity and brains is explanation enough, some credit is due to the superior political sense of the French people. Rich landowners and the Paris mob acclaimed Boulanger, the peasants were more sagacious. There was corruption in the Third Republic, always. But so there was in the autocratic regimes of the Bourbons and the Napoleons. One difference between a democracy and a tyranny is that tyranny prevents the exposure, but fosters the growth, of corruption.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

THE ROOT AND THE FLOWER

Ruins and Visions. Poems by STEPHEN SPENDER. *Faber.* 6s.

Life and The Poet. By STEPHEN SPENDER. *Secker and Warburg. Searchlight Book.* 2s.

Ruins and Visions is not an easy book to appraise. If one wants to quote strikingly, the half-dozen passages or so that call for the spotlight have already been picked by reviewers. (I arrive, I am sorry to say, rather late on the scene.) These passages—especially the stanzas in "The Fates" on the role of spectators in a theatre—could be cited again as the obviously best things in the book. But a reviewer isn't, or shouldn't be, an anthologist; and the spotlight gives a peculiarly distorted view of Mr. Spender's achievement. While the "bits" are there, of course, the interest and excitement of his verse lie deeper. Not the clear-cut outline, the detachable lyric, but pressure of experience, is what we have come to value in his writing. He gropes after discovery, an Icarus in an undergrowth, hacking away, penetrating, muddling and striking lucky, always in a wood, always about to gain the cornfields in the sun. His patently lyrical moods are not necessarily his best; in fact, the crystals and roses, the melting attitudes of crucifixion, which reappear from time to time, detract from seriousness.

> Pull down the blind and lie on the bed,
> And clasp the hour in the glass of one room
> Against your mouth like a crystal doom. . . .

There is the soft centre. At such moments self-pity becomes conventional and we are exasperated by the mooning and yearning ego content with a gesture.

The curious thing about Mr. Spender is that he can be soft and arduous at the same time; despite lapses, there is a continuity which carries over from one poem to another and makes his work, as a whole, more remarkable than single examples of it. He aims at being truthful, whatever the cost, about himself and about the world he lives in. He gives us in the first place personal history. There is the lover, with an air of "Look, we are coming through!" whose past mistakes and failures clog the present. The poems at the beginning of *Ruins and Visions* entitled "A Separation," communicate vividly a sense of loss. Despair, pity and self-pity, the uselessness as well as the inevitability of regret, rise tardily to the surface out of regions of pain. The blow is softened (this is the condition of Mr. Spender's advances in self-knowledge), but not so completely as to muffle impact. "The Journey" and "No Orpheus, No Eurydice" are good examples of the growth of a Spender poem. In the latter, tender violence—

> Nipples of bullets, precipices,
> Ropes, knives, all
> Now would seem as gentle
> As the far away kisses
> Of her these days remove—

gives way to a mood more distinct as the poet realises the finality of parting, and sees himself fruitlessly exploring hells where his "pale darling" is not to be found.

> O, but if he started
> Upon that long journey
> Of the newly departed,
> Where one and all are born poor
> Into death naked,
> Like a slum Bank Holiday
> Of bathers on a desolate shore;
>
> If with nerves strung to a harp
> He searched among the spirits there,
> Looking and singing for his wife
> To follow him back into life
> Out of this dull leaden place
> He would never find there
> Her cold, starry, wondering face.
>
> For he is no Orpheus,
> She no Eurydice.
> She has truly packed and gone. . . .

The vision of Orpheus half-emerges, like a scene behind gauze, and fades; we are made to feel hesitation and growth in the poet as he writes. More detachment, in the circumstances, would have given us a baffled Orpheus with no autobiography left clinging, a flower without a root. And if Mr. Spender were that sort of writer, the resulting poem might be more single and impressive. There is a tendency to assume that poetry should provide the Sung vases of literature; but, in fact, there are comparatively few of them, and those few are not so isolated as they seem. How far is the reader satisfied by the perfectly cut-off work of art? *Madame Bovary*, a Shakespeare lyric, a sonnet by Baudelaire, may appear miraculously apart, yet passion as well as curiosity drives us to devour Flaubert's letters and Baudelaire's journal, to gobble up any scrap of legend about Shakespeare. A number of modern poets (including Lawrence and Eliot) have discovered indispensable material in the conflicts out of which they write. And Mr. Spender doesn't merely drag in fragments of a story, but keeps his poetry tethered to life, to the situations—whether of marriage and separation or of a world at war—he has himself experienced.

It is a special kind of self-revelation and truthfulness that has provided, here, the lines on ambition, the green garden shutting off war, the theatricality of "normal" behaviour, experiences of friendship and love. Mr. Spender, perhaps, is the poet of muddle; but even slipshod sentences and hazy feelings are justified so far as they enable him to prod experience a little further. Reading his poems, one may be reminded of a journey through one of those pleasure caves in a Luna Park. We take our seats in the bumping and slowly revolving tub, to drift awhile in darkness before shooting rapids; a brightly lit grotto confronts us round a corner, or a spider hanging in mid-air unexpectedly tickles our faces; more rapids, a skeleton or two, a pastoral tableau, and we are back again, rubbing our eyes, in daylight. The journey may seem to have let us down, but, after all, it provided the excitements we now belittle. So with a Spender poem I often feel, "How much more might have happened, and very nearly *did* happen!" Unsatisfactory? Maybe. But by always edging towards greater things *Ruins and Visions*, in fact, enlarges its poetry, and in general Mr. Spender is better worth reading than the safe writer who compounds at a lower level.

In his Searchlight Book Mr. Spender further explains himself. All that he says is not applicable to poetry in general: he assumes, for example, in others the focus of the present, Left Wing sympathies, a protracted adolescence, egocentricity as marked as his own; but no better or more explanatory guide to Mr. Spender's poetry could be imagined. *Life and the Poet*, though awkwardly written, contains some of the best criticism he has provided. The word "poetry" is used widely to cover the activity of all who are "able to enjoy being for its own sake, if only for a moment."

> The poetic being the realisation in art of what rejoices in its being, there is no dividing line, strictly, between what is and poetry. What is, is potential poetry, one might say, a potential poet. For the poet is he who gives tongue to what is when it becomes one, through experience, with his own being.
>
> It follows, too, that there is no dividing line between the poet and the audience which enters into his poetry. The poet puts into words the potential poetry of other minds. If they accept it as poetry, it is because they accept it as their own poetry, something which they, given the illumination, now see, and might have said.

True of Claudel, Eliot, Yeats? Perhaps. True, certainly (note the absence of dividing lines between poetry and its sources, the poet and the reader) of Mr. Spender.

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NEW NOVELS

Affairs of Destiny. By GEORGES SIMENON. *Routledge.* 8*s.*

The Three Bamboos. By ROBERT STANDISH. *Peter Davies.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

Financial Times. By RONALD FRASER. *Cape.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Nine Lives of Bill Nelson. By GERALD KERSH. *Heinemann.* 6*s.*

Simenon has been presented to the British public until recently only as the creator of Maigret. Palates jaded with Poirot and Wimsey found a welcome new flavour in the French detective and admired the greater skill and discretion of his presentation. But to some these qualities were a tantalising promise of more serious work to come. Simenon's serious books have been long and abundantly available in France. The two which I have read seemed to possess the same capacity to tantalise without altogether satisfying.

There was humour, perception and high intelligence; but there was also an apparently deliberate heaviness of atmosphere. In the two stories under review there is a considerable clarification; they should enhance Simenon's reputation in this country.

Simenon moves in the same harsh, slightly sinister world as Maupassant. Indeed, his debt to Maupassant is very evident in both these stories. Both writers achieve all that the American tough writers have attempted, without ever falling into the American pit of sentimental understatement. Simenon shares with his master a capacity for saying a minimum without ever saying too little; he also shares the rare ability to inspire pity without demanding it. *Newhaven-Dieppe*, the first of the two stories included in *Affairs of Destiny*, is an acutely painful story of simplicity confronted with a too complex situation. Maloin, a Dieppe signalman, is on duty in his box on a winter night. He witnesses a murder on the quay and retrieves, without the murderer's knowledge, the treasure for which the crime was committed. His simplicity is then faced with a surfeit of strong and contradictory emotions—fear of discovery, personal greed, generous ambition for his daughter and pity for the murderer. It is Simenon's triumph that he presents the last motive, superficially the least probable, as the one which finally overwhelms Maloin and forces him to action.

In an attempt to succour the fugitive murderer, Maloin kills him in self-defence. He regains his simplicity by giving himself up to the police. But this simplicity is now tinged with insanity; guilt has oppressed him so intolerably that he refuses the legitimate means of defence. There is a vivid cinematic beauty about this story; the lighted signal box brooding over the quays, the mist-enveloped harbour, the Paris express groaning like a tram through the streets. And the fusion of the story and its background is here complete and satisfying.

In the second story the background is sometimes too insistent. Norman peasant life provides an atmosphere of cupidity, tigerish family devotion, malice and stupidity which is almost too powerful for the story. Madame Pointreau murders her son-in-law to protect her three daughters from his mismanagement of the family farm. She is pursued, not by guilt, but by a succession of disasters which finally deprive her of all the advantages which she had sought from the murder. Madame Pointreau is a very different character from Maloin: she is strong, ruthless and self-assured. Yet she, too, is finally the victim of her own simplicity, though in this case it is the simplicity of a too concentrated purpose and not of indecision. In this sense the forbidding English title is well justified. Both Maloin and Madame Pointreau are free to make decisions, but their freedom is strictly limited by their different backgrounds. Both move in a world which is pitifully beyond their control.

In a recent review I attacked sociological novels on the grounds that the information could be better and more briefly imparted in pamphlet form. Mr. Standish compels a revision of that judgment. In his preface he states a modest aim:

> For what it is worth this book may help those who know nothing of Japan and its people to learn a little of a race whose fate in this struggle will decide the course of the world's history for several generations, or longer.

My ignorance of Japan makes it impossible to vouch for the accuracy of Mr. Standish's picture, but I can vouch for the conviction which it carries.

The book traces four generations of a Samurai family, from Commodore Perry's first expedition to Japan in 1853 to the aerial attack on Pearl harbour. With an odious logic the whole psychological and economic development of the country is unrolled. Money supplants the sword of the Samurai, warships supplant dignified isolation. It is an atrocious story, not so much because the bankers and the military are victorious, as because there appears to have been practically no resistance to their victory. Clearly there is a danger of a Japanese-Vansittartism in this country, and this book will do little to allay it. As if to compensate for his unrelieved denigration of the Japanese male, Mr. Standish has a curious habit of placing the female on a pedestal. If there is really so sharp a moral differentiation of the sexes, Japan is unlike any other country. But this remains a triumphant justification of the novel as a vehicle for conveying information. It is impossible to see how Mr. Standish could have told us so much in any other form, and he avoids the irritation of unnecessary plot and laborious psychology. This is a frankly two-dimensional picture of a people and period which are of absorbing topical interest.

The starting-point of *Financial Times* is a reasonably funny joke. Into a "highly artistic" family is born a commercial genius. His struggle to free himself from the bonds of creative art are as ferocious as any endured by a Handel or an Elizabeth Barrett. Up to this point the joke is adequate, but one joke cannot make a book. Mr. Fraser is compelled to turn profound on us. The artistic family, which I took at first to be a rather unfunny imitation of Miss Kennedy's Sangers, is suddenly elevated to Olympus. We are asked to take seriously this god-like menagerie of young men and women whose witty names are Raphael, Carpaccio, Leonardo, Ingres. . . . They are all either bearded, eccentric and ferocious, or dreamy, idyllic and profound. At any moment they will compose an impromptu symphony, dash off a glorious portrait, or pour out sweet verses. Titian is the outsider who prefers to make money; but for all the vituperation which Mr. Fraser pours on to his vile commercial head, my sympathies remained staunchly with him throughout the book. The key to the whole artistic hocus-pocus lies in the argument between Titian and his wife on the education of their son. Titian has the disagreeable ambition of sending him to a commercial college, but his wife will not have the boy's creative genius thwarted: he shall go to Winchester and New College, like any other budding composer.

The final revelation comes soon after. By far the longest and most eloquent tirade of the book is made in the last few pages by the author's favourite character, but it is not, like previous

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HUTCHINSON

and far feebler tirades, in favour of Art, but in passionate defence of the permanent Civil Service. Winchester, New College and the Foreign Office have evolved a delightful myth on the subject of art. Creative artists are either robust eccentrics or misty angels. They are to be highly honoured provided they conform to one of these two categories. Personally, I prefer a jolly old Black Marketeer to a phoney artist playing a lute under a willow while the chaps hum *dulce domum* in a punt.

In the early pages of Mr. Kersh's book his hero is described in the following terms by one of his "Chinas":—

> Bill Nelson . . . had a brain. He had personality. He wasn't afraid of anything or anybody. His heart was too big for his body. He'd go up a tree for a cat, or down a well for a sparrer. He was as strong as a bull. He was as soft as a woman. He liked kids. He liked pretty nearly everybody . . . but when it came to the fight, he was a wild cat.

Sergeant Bill Nelson of the Coldstream Guards very soon emerges as an unadulterated saint. One-by-one his fellow N.C.O.'s take up the story of his heroism, his gentleness, his humility, his self-sacrifice. Now it is conceivable that a saint might join the Guards, but his sainthood would be an insuperable barrier to promotion. One or the other would have to be surrendered. My admiration for Guards N.C.O.s is genuine and profound: those that I knew were ironical, mainly just, courageous and dutiful. But they are not saints and their calling is frankly incompatible with sainthood. The purpose of the Brigade is to produce a particular type of soldier, and the production demands thick hides in the producers. The second weakness of this book is that Guards N.C.O.s do not talk as Mr. Kersh describes. They use a colourful but strictly limited vocabulary. Yet the narrators of these stories talk with a slick transatlantic technique which gives them prolonged eloquence. Finally, Mr. Kersh is shamelessly sentimental, and insists on foisting this weakness on all his characters. My own experience of the Guards Depot in June, 1940, convinced me that the irony of most sergeants in the Brigade is far deeper than their sentimentality. Indeed, I believe it to be their strongest quality. Mr. Kersh also subscribes to the sentimental fallacy that it is always the best who get killed. If this were so, how odious would be the stigma of survival!

PHILIP TOYNBEE

DICK SHEPPARD

H. R. L. Sheppard. By R. ELLIS ROBERTS. *John Murray.* 15s.

Canon Sheppard was a genius, and he had the infectious energy that is one of the surest signs of genius. Mr. Ellis Roberts quotes a recent remark about the number of people who are still "free-wheeling off Dick Sheppard." The organising capacity, which had such remarkable results at St. Martin's, was closely akin, as Bernard Shaw pointed out, to the genius of the great advertiser. The infectious quality of his enthusiasm was one of the most extraordinary human facts I have met with. He even managed to be "hearty" without repelling; he was a priest of the Anglican Church who could number among his followers thousands of the irreligious. His sermons seemed to me thin and sentimental and most of his jokes would look silly on paper. Yet he constantly inspired both laughter and faith. He was certainly a saint. He so far overcame his body that even when he was passing sleepless nights and going through all the peculiar agonies of asthma, he seemed incapable of thinking of anything except the other people he was with or the matter under discussion. His illness was no secret during the years I knew him, but until I read Mr. Roberts's biography I did not realise how constant and brutal a part illness played in his life. I was myself drawn to him by a quality which also particularly appealed to Rose Macaulay. Mr. Roberts quotes her remark that Sheppard's faith in his own conclusions was not dogmatic; he was apt to qualify his assertions with a disarming admission that he was really not sure at all. It was near the end of his life that he remarked that he had "no Faith, very little Hope—only Charity." Yet it is quite certain that he gave to a lot of other people the faith he himself lacked.

Mr. Roberts bases his study of Sheppard on this wretched conflict and uncertainty in himself. He separates in Sheppard "Lawrie," the very sensitive boy, who was deeply humiliated at school by the cruel tongue of a foolish schoolmaster, and "Dick," the actor, who built up a public personality which the world applauded. Mr. Ellis Roberts rightly points out that the sadism of a single schoolmaster could not have accounted, to the extent which Sheppard himself imagined, for his self-depreciation and "inferiority." The disease must have taken root at an earlier age. But the wound was certainly deep. I learn from Mr. Roberts for the first time that Dick only solved the problem of his misery at Marlborough by emptying his water-jug into his bed night after night in order to make himself ill. By this means he succeeded in giving himself double pneumonia and getting away from the school. Incidentally, he almost died. But the result of his conflict was not wholly tragic. It was because he was taught by this schoolmaster to think that he was no good for anything, because Lawrie was always inclined to regard Sheppard as a failure, that Dick ever came into existence. Without that conflict Sheppard would have been no very remarkable man. He had no great intellectual attainments; he never thought out his position in theology or ethics; he was always in a muddle about politics and economics; when he built up a "peace army" he could never make up his mind how to use it. He was so good at games, had so much natural charm and he was so well connected that if he had not been afflicted with this cruel doubt about his own worthiness, he would have been, I suspect, a conventional success instead of one of God's chosen failures.

I began this book with a prejudice Dick Sheppard's peculiar quality was to make scores of people believe that he was more intimate with them than with anyone else. I always disagreed with Sheppard: I was never a "follower." But I, too, enjoyed this sense of intimacy. I was, therefore, full of misgivings about Mr. Roberts's biography. There are, of course, things in it I dislike. But I know of no one who would have made a better job of this complex subject. I blushed, but less often than I expected. I see no reason to agree with those who have criticised Mr. Roberts for revealing the tragedy of Canon Sheppard's private life. To say as much as he does say was surely necessary to give a picture that was not aggravatingly incomplete. It is not Mr. Roberts's fault that the army of doubters, soldiers, intellectuals and workers who followed in some sort this muddle-headed Christian pacifist saint and actor should each have had his own private relation with Dick Sheppard and be dissatisfied with anyone else's interpretation.

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RIDER

SOBER SENSE

Agenda. Vol. I, No. 2. HUMPHREY MILFORD. *Oxford University Press.* 6s.

Relief and Reconstruction. *Royal Institute of International Affairs.* 1s. 6d.

The Minorities Problem. *League of Nations Union.* (*Free*).

Peasant Programme. (*Obtainable from Czechoslovak Economic Advisory Association*).

The serious bodies interested in world affairs have long passed the stage of expecting detailed policy pronouncements from the Government. They are aware that most departments have "planning" committees, whose suggestions for good reasons or bad remain unpublished. The unofficial bodies, therefore, in the democratic manner, are stating their views ahead of their rulers. The method is sound enough, for they command expert advice which is not hampered by the need to propitiate political prejudice or official inertia. They can offer ideas to the strong public demand for concrete proposals on post-war reconstruction. They leave unsolved, however, the problem which was so constantly evident in the inter-war period, of a public opinion which is far in advance of, and in a long view, far more enlightened than that of governmental circles, but which does not command power. Miss Heather Harvey in the London School of Economics *Agenda* puts one aspect of this fairly:

> The average citizen is very sure he wanted to win the last peace; but he is not at all sure that the governments which he put into the saddle did not lose it for him, and then lie to him about it. So this time he wants to think the thing out for himself. The Atlantic Charter, like patriotism, is not enough; he wants to *know*.

She ends, however, inconsistently, with an astonishingly Fascist conclusion on information; that the Government must provide it to lead public opinion in support of its own action.

> Authoritative information released by the Government and passed on by the experts to the people gives the best foundation for the convictions of the people.

Does it, indeed? And what about the misleading information (not to use Miss Harvey's harsh word "lie") which was offered by the National Government before the war? The solution, whatever it may be, is not this. *Agenda* goes in for articles by eminent authorities: this number includes Mr. Harold Butler on the *American Approach to Reconstruction*; Mr. McDougall on food problems; and a very interesting article on colonial development by Lord Hailey.

Chatham House on its unofficial side has committees at work on reconstruction, and has produced a first Report. It contains the points which have for long been matters of common agreement, viz., a short-term policy of relief (food and medical aid) which can merge into a long-term policy of reconstruction. For finance, some adaptation of lease-lend principles, for organisation a central inter-governmental system using both official and unofficial agencies for distribution—a "Reconstruction and Supply Authority," and careful planning beforehand on transport, priorities, staffing, are included. The Report is specially commendable because it recognises that security in which to carry out reconstruction will be essential. It makes one genuflection to the artificial attitude of the official world, in saying that post-war reconstruction will be based not upon idealistic urgings but upon a community of interest. This is just silly; if the sacrifices needed for international rebuilding are to be made by the victorious peoples, they will spring from the same altruism which evokes the sacrifices of war.

The League of Nations Union paper on minorities is a lucid outline of a problem whose permanent impatience English people usually ignore. It may perhaps be hoped that next time the British official attitude will not be "We are not interested in minorities"—till the Sudeten, or some other minority, drags Europe towards war.

The peasant representatives in London of the South-East European United Nations have agreed upon an agrarian programme which demands a common land policy based upon individual small proprietorship and co-operative working, marketing, and credit. They demand also improved cultivation, calculation and rural welfare, and ask for help from Britain, America and Soviet Russia in their reconstruction. The plan, being democratic and co-operative rather than communist, is more likely to appeal to their Western allies than to the Soviet Union.

FREDA WHITE

EMPERORS OF BRAZIL

Amazon Throne. The Story of the Braganzas of Brazil. By BERTITA HARDING. *Harrap.* 12s. 6d.

On November 26th, 1807, a long, confused procession of labouring waggons and muddy carriages made its way beneath heavy rain through the gates of Lisbon towards the harbour of Ajuda. It included, besides the entire Portuguese royal family—the mad Queen, the Regent Dom João, his consort, Carlota Joaquina, and their children—some fifteen thousand attendants of one rank and another, from more than a thousand of the proudest Lusitanian nobles to a vast assemblage of maids, valets, grooms, cooks, scullions and gypsies. Behind them advanced the armies of Napoleon; before them—vaguely and not very hopefully apprehended—loomed the refuge of the New World. The Queen herself knew neither where she was going nor from whom she was being rescued; but, as the procession passed, desperate screams of fear—*Ay, Jesus! Ay, Jesus!*—came shrilling out of the recesses of her curtained carriage.

Early in March the following year, after a voyage of such squalor and discomfort that the Queen, the Regent's wife, and all their ladies were attacked by a plague of lice and obliged to shave their heads, the royal squadron rode at anchor in the bay of Rio. It was the first time that any member of the royal family had had a glimpse of their gigantic, fabulously rich but utterly neglected possessions in Brazil; and the Regent, who, notwithstanding his greed and sloth—and the expression of startled semi-idiocy which caused him to resemble a corpulent marmot poised on its hind-legs—was a not unintelligent or unprogressive person, determined to do his best by his odd inheritance. He built, planted, legislated and, in an effort to infuse his semi-barbarian subjects with a civilising spirit of social emulation, coined and distributed a huge assortment of high-sounding titles. On the whole, he succeeded well; the Brazilians liked and admired though they sometimes laughed at him; and the heaviest cross Dom João had to bear was the appalling example set by Carlota Joaquina, one of the maddest of the Spanish Bourbons, fearsomely ugly and extravagantly libidinous, who had nicknamed her husband "John Banana." As she grew uglier—owing to some affection of the endocrine gland, which, in middle age, produced a rank crop of hair all over her face and body—her conduct grew more violent and more outrageous. At length she went too far—by arranging the assassination of a lover's wife; and Dom João thereupon ordered her to be imprisoned in the penitential cells of a convent, where she remained, a savage and unrepentant recluse, till she was released to attend the marriage of her son, Dom Pedro, to the Arch-Duchess Leopoldina of Austria. In April, 1821, accompanied by Carlota, Dom João left Brazil and returned to Portugal; and, during

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By H. Benjamin. 4/6
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the summer of 1923, Brazil (with, it would appear, Dom João's tacit consent) declared its independance under the rule of his eldest son, Dom Pedro, who subsequently assumed the style of Emperor.

From this material, from the lively career of Dom Pedro, his political enthusiasms, his numerous and tumultuous amours and the successful fight that, towards the end of his existence, he put up against his usurping brother, the wicked Dom Miguel, and from the relatively prosaic history of the last Brazilian Emperor, Dom Pedro II, a worthy old gentleman, in whom the influence of a pious and learned mother prevailed over the blood of his raffish father, Mrs. Harding has compiled an extremely entertaining narrative. The background of the story—half European, half exotic, full of suggestions to the more imaginative (or escapist) reader of bright, lush colours, luxuriant volcanic landscapes and of architecture in which a touch of Indian fantasy mingles with the sumptuous intricacies of Portuguese baroque—makes a magnificent setting for such characters as the profligate and improbably handsome Emperor Pedro I and his mistress, the designing Marqueza de Santos. Mrs. Harding's style is on a par with that of the average modern romantic biographer. The epithets she chooses are usually shop-soiled, and, like a Homeric poet, she is not above making the same epithet do service twice. On page 84 one finds the remarkable statement that Dom Pedro was "in many ways *the prototype of a remote ancestor*, Don Juan of Austria"; and from a sentence on page 100 it would seem that the authoress believes the French Directoire to have been preceded by the Empire. Luckily, the interest of Mrs. Harding's matter outweighs the disadvantages of her literary manner. In the present state of the book-market, *Amazon Throne* is a volume well worth borrowing. PETER QUENNELL.

The Stock Exchange Official Year Book, 1942. Edited by THE SECRETARY OF THE SHARE AND LOAN DEPARTMENT OF THE LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE. *Thos. Skinner and Co.* 80s.

Once again the familiar financial tome appears, having surmounted the difficulties of censorship, reduced staff and paper economy. The last hazard has shorn the volume of the Supplementary Chapters and General Information Section; nevertheless, 8 lb. avoirdupois, or over 3,000 pages, remain. The general arrangement has been maintained and full particulars of thousands of securities and companies are given under the usual groups which have tab references. Emergency addresses of companies are given and a "stop press" section of information received too late for embodiment in the main text. The standard of paper, print and binding reflects credit on all concerned.

Week-end Competitions

No. 652

Set by Allan M. Laing

Experienced NEW STATESMAN AND NATION readers find that the "Personal" Advertisements on the back page often provide them with entertaining examples of humour, impudence and ingenuity (the last exercised mainly in abbreviations). The usual prizes are offered for the best imaginary "personals" of this type. Limit: fifty words, each abbreviation to count as one word.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, August 10th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

Set by W. T.

The usual prizes are offered for the best sonnets on rain—each line to have one foot instead of five.

Report by W. T.

A deluge of entries, despite Sir Robert Witt's complaint: "If these Be lame, W.T.'s To blame; To put In a minute One foot In it Indeed Is vain; You need The rain To greet—Two feet." I think that the form laid down invites an object neat, fanciful and sharply carved as a cameo by Gautier or Banville. Allan M. Laing's last line is "Our week-ends"—so out goes one of the scratch players. William Bliss is humorous, which is admissible—but not exquisitely so. Pibwob's ingenuity is prizeworthy, but the variety of "monometer" feet he uses makes his sonnet very irregular:

Confound
Nefarious
Aquarius!
He's drowned
The ground,
And various
Malarias
Abound.
I'll
Within
Portals
While
Swithin
Chortles.

Cyril Bibby offers three sonnets, Petrarchan, Shakespearian and Miltonic, all well towards the winning-post. Behind him stream E. W. Fordham, R.E.E.O., Ignotus, L. E. J., Elizabeth Lister, Leslie Johnson, a Digger, R. S. Jaffray, B.R.K., and G. J. Blundell, leaving a very large field behind. In front there are still six, almost neck and neck. E. D. and Ronald Mason are a split second late at the post, and the judge declares a dead heat between R. Bates, G. de Vavasour, F.C.C., and Nancy Gunter.

RAIN-STORM AT NIGHT.

I wake
In bed
With dread,
Mistake
This breath,
This huge
Deluge
For death.
I pray
Distraught;
Next day
Will nought
Be found
Undrowned?

F.C.C.

RAIN.

Hooves tap
And mutter
In gap
And gutter;
Shoes
Of glass
Bruise
The grass;
Sharp feet
Lash fire
From street
And spire.
Rain
Again.

R. BATES

RAIN.

Drums low,
Long-drawn
The lawn
Beat slow,
As though
Some Faun
This dawn
Should go.
Slim, shy,
Aloof,
To ply
His hoof
On my
Red roof.

NANCY GUNTER

This plain
Deformed
The rain
Transformed.
Shrills high
The wind:
"Defy
The fiend!"
Blood cools.
We seem
To hear
The Fools
That scream
For Lear.

G. DE VAVASOUR

COMPANY MEETING

BEECHAMS PILLS

THE Fourteenth Ordinary General Meeting of Beechams Pills, Limited, was held on July 29th in London.

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